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BY ANNETTE MARIE MAILLARD,

AUTHORESS OF "ZINGRA," "THE COMPULSORY MARRIAGE," "MILES TREMENHERE," ETC., ETC.

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WORKS, NEWTON.

TO

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND,

AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY OFFERED BY

THE AUTHORESS.

MATRIMONIAL SHIPWRECKS.

CHAPTER I.

"ALL men are alike, my dear Mrs. Bruce—the most inconsiderate, unreasonable creatures on the face of the earth! Now, there was young Lincoln, I certainly thought him an exception to the general rule, and cherished the idea, whenever the absurdity of others came before my eyes in glaring colours, too unmistakable to permit any error on my part; yet, how did he act? Could any thing be more ridiculous? Because, as a girl, I flirted with him, and certainly *did* allow him to believe our affections mutually engaged—he actually fancied me in earnest! Could any thing be more purely unsophisticated? I ask you, as my dearest, most intimate friend—as one who has known me since girlhood."

"I really never exactly knew the circumstances of the case," was the rejoinder

"The facts are these," continued the first speaker. "As you are aware, I was brought up entirely in the

country; and except the county race-balls, or occasional ones at home or at friends' houses, I knew little of gaiety. What *could* a girl do in such a case? No mother, sisters, or brothers; no one but a good country squire of a father! Why, fall in love, to be sure, and so I fancied myself for a whole year with Lieutenant Lincoln of the 78th, who was quartered near the old manor-house. There was no one else to flirt with, and then he danced exquisitely! I *never* shall forget how he waltzed! It was scarcely human, so beautiful! They had none of those horrible *deux temps* then; no, it was really in time to the music; and he whirled you and himself round until your head became completely lost, and all you were capable of discerning was the unceasing glare of his red coat (he always came in uniform to a ball): it certainly *was* delicious!" Here the speaker paused, sighing over the memory of one of her youthful days!

"But your love affair, my dear?" questioned the impatient listener.

"Ah! true." Here the bosom gave one last expiring gasp, and the lady continued—"Of course, between the pauses of the waltz we conversed; we often, too, went out riding; he somehow was always hovering about our neighbourhood. Then, my father being very hospitable, called on the regiment, which was quartered in the town, and eventually Lincoln became a constant visiter at our house; but he was very poor then, and it was absurd on his part to suppose that I meant any thing by our innocent flirtation—quite absurd!"

"I heard," said Mrs. Bruce, "that a positive engagement had existed between you; I don't exactly remember who told me: Mr. Elton was my informer, I think."

"Oh, Mr. Elton!" responded the other, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, and yet she blushed slightly. "Mr. Elton always runs away with some strange idea; he is far too literal for everyday life. 'Tis true, a boy and girl species of engagement was laughingly entered into on my part; I couldn't seriously intend such a thing in his position. He swore he never would love or marry another, and I said something of the same sort, but only in fun, and this continued a year, then he was ordered away; and, just to tranquillize him, I promised to be true and faithful, but only in *badinage;* and this is what I think so *very* unreasonable on his part. When I married poor Adair, three months afterwards, Lincoln called me perjured, false—all that was wicked. I assure you his letter made me quite ill for a whole week, for he so cruelly attacked my motives in choosing Adair; because he happened to be wealthy, and some twenty years my senior, he called me *interested,* 'bartered for gold!'—I scarcely know what, and every one knows I am the most uncalculating woman in the world; but my father approved of Adair, who was an intimate friend of his, and I hope I knew my duty too well to my dear departed parent to contradict his wishes."

"And what, then, became of Lincoln? All this is new to me, beyond the few words Mr. Elton spoke," inquired Mrs. Bruce.

"After writing me that dreadful letter, he exchanged

into an Indian regiment, and sailed for Calcutta. Poor fellow! with all his faults I really believe he loved me, and felt my marriage with another keenly, but it was very foolish his doing so." Here a sigh again closed her speech.

At that moment the door opened, and gave admittance to a man of about sixty years of age; the hair, of almost silvery whiteness, added a nobility of expression to a fine, open, but most scrutinizing countenance; his eyes were dark hazel, with dark eyelashes, and the brows above them still retained their earlier colouring, and were black and strongly marked; in figure he was scarcely middle height, with an unsettled bustling air, which, to a nervous person, was any thing but tranquillizing: the man, the eyes, and the thoughts seemed never at rest. Mrs. Adair's countenance, though not one of the most expressive in the world, plainly indicated excessive annoyance when she beheld her visiter; though this he could scarcely be termed by his manner, for he evidently came like one privileged to enter at all times unannounced, as by some right or courtesy. He cast a hasty glance round the room, not *quite* looking at the ladies, and yet they felt his eye was upon them; his glance was like that of a good portrait, which seems to every one to be looking especially on him or her. Had any individual sat in the remotest corner of that drawing-room he would have been quite conscientiously prepared to swear that Mr. Elton *exclusively* stared at him, and yet he looked equally at all, saw all, judged all, and the impression his advent made on all;

thus he at once perceived Mrs. Adair's annoyance, and after saluting both ladies with his own peculiar nod and "how d'ye do?" he added, fixing his keen eyes on that lady's, "I have disturbed you, eh? sure to drop in inopportunely, am I not? but never mind me, you know I love ladies' talk; pray, continue your conversation, you were saying——"

"I really scarcely know," uttered Mrs. Adair, evidently avoiding the solicited continuation.

"We were speaking of *crochet*," replied woman's ready filling up of an awkward position; Mrs. Bruce was the speaker.

"Pardon me," answered Mr. Elton, dropping into a seat, "that was possibly a previous subject; the last, I think, related in some way to Indian affairs, am I not correct?"

"Really Mr. Elton," said Mrs. Adair, drawing herself up in offended dignity, "I must say it is exceedingly ungentlemanly——." She arrived no further in her speech.

"Listening at the door," you would say, he replied quietly; "and I, quite agreeing with you about the rudeness of the act, must correct you. I am not guilty of it, cleanse me of that foul stain; I read your hastily silenced conversation on your face; so again I beg of you, don't mind me, continue it, and I will listen also with attention and pleasure."

There was, however, an awkward pause. Mrs. Bruce as a guest could not very well take up the broken thread of their discourse, and knot it again unsanctioned by the hostess, who sat in perfect silence, half of indignation,

half of unwillingness to continue the topic before Mr. Elton. This same Mr. Elton was a formidable personage in her sight. Left early a widow by her accommodating husband, who, seeing no possible chance of making her happy during his lifetime, died, to possibly meet her dearest wishes. One thing is certain, she did not regret him deeply; but whether she was of a disposition ever to be happy or content in any state, is another question. Mr. Adair left her two pledges of their mutual uncomfortableness, a daughter (for she took the precedence by age) and a son. Angelina (this name was her mother's choice) and Richard, horrid "Dick," as he was generally called, in compliment to his godfather, Dick Elton, Mr. Adair's oldest and dearest friend; and, to the dreadful discomfort of his widow, we may be permitted to suspect the only real weeper adorning her widowed dress, this man was not only left as sole executor to his will, but joint guardian to the children. We will allow Mr. Elton's own character to depict itself in the course of this tale, and merely state that, though this position gave him a certain control and right in the household of Mrs. Adair, it was like a path of sweet scattered rose-leaves before a bridal train, where Cupid, in envious act at the loss of two votaries, slips the thorns underneath for Hymen to discover, returning a conqueror over the flowers already faded. Fortunately for Mr. Elton, he rather liked thorns, and at once saw what he had to overcome. Rose-leaves puzzled him; he had been brought up in a harsh school of life, and too generally perhaps feared

the rose might conceal a scorpion's sting. He was a man of vast mind, and right judging in most things: he felt in how unpleasant a position his dear friend Adair had placed him; nevertheless he was resolved to do his duty, but at the same time interfere as little as possible with the children, unless called upon to do so. For a few years after Mr. Adair's death all went on admirably. Angelina was twelve years of age, Richard, eight. She had a governess under her mother's eye, he a tutor. This did not exactly please Elton; he would rather have sent Richard to a good public school, but the mother pleaded that his health was not the very best, and so Elton gave in. A severe accident which happened to himself some short time afterwards, obliged him to visit Madeira for his own health; and constantly hearing the very best accounts from Mrs. Adair about the well-doing of the children, with much anxiety about his perfect restoration to convalescence, he was induced to remain abroad five years. When he returned to the Grange, the widow's estate in Warwickshire, it was to find the most complete alteration in all things. Mrs. Adair was very inventive in the manner of educating youth, fond of novelty and fresh schemes every day. There never had existed two such children as hers, and they should be models of perfection in all things. *This* was a fixed idea, her only one of the kind. How she blessed the temporary absence of that "most provoking, interfering man, Mr. Elton, and what a shame Adair should have given him so much power!"

This she said a hundred times at least to Mrs. Bruce,

her best friend; and when he was gone to Madeira, she set skilfully to work at home, after her own fashion. Her first act was to dismiss Richard's tutor, and place him under the care of Angelina's governess, a woman of an iron frame of mind, through whose system all the classics were spread like the intersected railroads through this happy land. All tongues, dead and living, were hers; and her own natural one was in no wise tardy in setting forth her knowledge to the world. The only needle she admitted the acquaintance of was the polar one; all others were ridiculously feminine for her. It more than once entered into Richard Adair's head, when under her care and teaching, to question whether she might not, by possibility, be the pole itself, disguised under the form of the very coldest, stiffest woman ever created. Under her care, he learned nothing, except almost to hate every thing feminine for her sake, and most certainly all tongues, except the good vernacular, in which he energetically wished at night—"That old Ovid's ghost would metamorphose her into something hideous before morning, and carry her off; or give himself the excuse of ignorance for baiting her to death with his trusty mastiff!" But morning came, and with it Miss Caffir and her books on the one hand, and sister Angelina, her pet, on the other. *Her* pet will speak whole volumes for Angelina, she was worthy of that distinction; consequently, what with the Kaffir's (as he called her) teaching and scolding, and Angelina's abetting, tale-bearing, and overbearingness, on the ground of priority of age, poor Richard became,

not broken-spirited, but worse—obstinate and rebellious. Mrs. Adair saw this would not do; she took a night to consider of it, a day to consult Mrs. Bruce, and then Miss Caffir's salary was paid, herself dethroned, and another grievous error committed. She engaged a tutor for both her children. She had a strong idea that, by bringing them up under the same person, with the same studies, they would become loving as babes in the wood, or a second edition of Castor and Pollux.

Mr. Bateman, the tutor, arrived. Richard was then ten years of age; two had slipped away under the Kaffir's care; the boy had grown very shrewd—a physiognomist too—he stared at Bateman a full inquiring glance, and forthwith liked him. We will pass over the succeeding three years, at the expiration of which Mr. Elton returned, perfectly renovated in health, and expecting to find both his wards prodigies. Angelina was a harsh, cold, pedantic *man*—in all but the garb; Richard was about as ignorant of classics, mathematics, or any other manly *bookishness* as he well could be; but he knew all the best points in a horse—could hunt, shoot, course, and any thing else which a full-grown sporting character might be expected to do. This discovery burst with fearful intensity on his mother's heart. For a year before, as his health appeared delicate, the family physician ordered him not to remain in town. Angelina, on the other hand, was under medical care in London. The brother and sister never could agree in any thing; so he was left at the Grange with Mr. Bateman, and Angelina and her mother repaired to town. She (the girl)

was forbidden all study; Richard, on the contrary, was ordered to "read hard," so Bateman said, to overtake his sister. If hard riding would have done it, Richard had won the day, for no sooner were tutor and pupil alone than away flew the boy's books; the man tried to reason *a little*, but the youth had the upper hand long before, and quiet, easy Bateman put by the classics, and with a spur to his heel, started off across country in a view hollo with his pupil, just to keep him out of harm, and brace up his failing strength with fresh air and genial exercise.

CHAPTER II.

In the midst of these merry doings, Elton dropped in to take an unexpected cup of tea with Mrs. Adair, in Eaton Square. "If," he exclaimed, after examining Angelina on various learned subjects, "my godson, Dick Adair, be as clever a scholar as you are, Angelina, he will become one of the lights of the age!"

But Dick never would be, at his foretelling, a Bude, shining almost over space infinite. Nature had been kindly disposed the day she created Dick Adair; what he might become, apart from her care, would be the forming of his mother, the Kaffir, and Mr. Bateman.

When Mr. Elton was first presented, after five years' absence, to Angelina, his heart involuntarily shrank back, snail-like, within its cell, from all collision. When he saw his godson, and the full, dark, daring, yet unvicious eye met his, out went Elton's hand, and the heart with it, to meet the boy's glad welcome. Richard remembered him as his father's friend; he never thought of a possibly severe guardian, mentor, or tormentor; he was the first and last who had ever said to him:—

"Resemble your father, my boy, and you will be a good man!"

He did not exactly know how to set about it, so, uninstructed, he went his own way, over hedge and ditch, at the heel of the hunt; or, boy as he was, not unfrequently in at the death, to the glory of the oldest hands in the county, who delighted to call him his father's son, and this was enough for Dick.

When Mr. Elton had quitted England, it was with a heart in perfect security regarding the prospects of young Adair. He had placed him under the care of a scholar and a gentleman; if his mother had been pleased to leave him thus, all would have been well; as it was, the natural goodness of the boy had alone preserved him from evil, worse far than what he had fallen into; for Miss Caffir, who was a time-server, a quick observer to choose the wiser part, had seen at a glance that to make friends with Angelina was the sure thing: accordingly, the precious pair between them nearly choked up the good seed in Richard by the vile weeds of Hypocrisy, and her sisters, Slander and Malevolence. Fortunately, these were false goddesses before whom he never could bend a knee; he laughed them to scorn; but such company left its trace, and the boy became suspicious of all his so-called superiors, and reckless of their good or ill opinion. Then came Bateman, the last person in the world to have followed on so many errors; he could not but trip at every step. His pupil liked him at a first glance, and commenced by *patronizing*, where the other should have taken the reins; and so insensibly was this done, that Bateman never perceived that when the young man *would* study, it was a condescension on his

part, or the desire of improvement, natural to a refined mind feeling its ignorance, and blushing for the talents lying dormant. Bateman was a man of education, sound and good; but a person so totally unfitted for the guidance of any youth, that it was a miracle his pupil ever learned any thing. He himself had sought study for the pure love of it, and he deemed all must do the same. In Angelina he possessed a gem in this respect; she was resolved to outshine all her own sex, and the other too, especially Richard, whom she hated with a most unsisterly hate. Miss Caffir commenced her classical education for her, Bateman completed it; and when Mr. Elton returned, he found the girl of seventeen a walking museum of knowledge, stuffed and artificially alive as the ornithological specimens therein, mouldy and difficult to decipher as many of its old manuscripts. Dick he found at the Grange in an old-fashioned red coat of his father's, following the hounds, and Bateman on a strong cob in sober black, spectacles on nose, following him. To be brief, the tutor was given his *congé*, but in all courtesy, and his pupil sent to a good public school; here he remained three years, and then he went on his travels (this was by Mrs. Adair's desire to "finish him") under the charge of another tutor. Verily he had read enough to satisfy any one; but, like "too many cooks," they would have marred all, if nature had not stepped in. At twenty he returned home; the mother's delight knew no bounds—her son was all perfection. "If he would go to the bar, he *must* be chancellor in time; general in the army, and F.M., K.C.B., and all the

other alphabetical abbreviations of honour besides, floated before her eyes, prime minister, any thing in short. But, strange perversity of early love, Richard Adair was at heart a jockey—the Turf his home, and Tattersall's the arena where all his powers were called forth to light; and, revelling in these delights, his heart turned towards the one who had first permitted his young wing to take this flight, Bateman, who now resided near London, and prepared private pupils for college, or any thing they might fancy better. The first leisure moment he found after his return, was devoted to a visit to this abode of rural castigation, and "reading with," as people term it; and great was the pleasure felt by the master when his old pupil cordially assured him that none other had ever succeeded him in his regards, though adverse fate had driven them different roads. It must be very pleasant for the hand which has flogged, or probably *ought* to have done so, to be grasped in friendship by the sufferer; 'tis a kissing the rod, particularly and practically humble, and humility in this age of overbearing pride is an immense virtue. Certainly young Adair had no pride either in his birth (the county man's heirloom) or in himself, handsome as he assuredly was; he was tall, some six feet, well made, well and firmly knit, though slight, good hands, finely and manfully shaped, handsome feet, and a head, nobly set on the shoulders, ornamented by rich, thickly, curling dark chestnut hair, a finely chiselled nose, pale, square, clever brow, arched brows, large roving chestnut eyes, of the perfect colour of the nut, shining

and polished, just emancipated from its rough outside shell, before the air has tarnished its fresh rich brownness, dark lashes shaded these, through which the flashing glance shot diamond stars, all laughter or feeling; certainly he must have known he was good-looking, but he did not seem to know or care; he never thought about it. He was a child of nature in all that was good or handsome in him, the rest was of the world—of the earth, earthy, attributable to the many errors of his education; he was not what is termed "slang," not a whit of it, perfectly easy, and perfectly assured that the only happiness in this world was to be met with in close connection with hounds and horses, so he sought their society and those associated with them, but he assumed no particular phraseology or dress; he could speak of a horse, hunt, or race, without technicalities to puzzle the uninitiated, or oaths or jockeyisms, and he could spend half the day in the company of his horses or grooms without cutting off the corners of his coat, sticking a hat with perfectly straight rims on the top of his head, or wearing a waistcoat below where never waist was ever seen, that is, nearly to his knees! All he did was from natural taste, so he hung out no banner to proclaim that his heart was in both kennel and stable.

Now we will return to Mrs. Adair's drawing-room in Eaton Square, where, after a painful silence of some moments, that lady thus replied to Mr. Elton's question as to their subject of conversation:—

"Well, 'tis true, Elton, we were talking about this most unpleasant charge which has been so unexpectedly

and unceremoniously cast upon me—this guardianship to a girl I never even knew the existence of until called upon to accept her as my ward, it is truly painful." Here she paused and assumed a look of the most perfect misery, glancing from one to the other for sympathy. It was, however, very evident that from Mr. Elton she had small chance of any, for he answered hastily:—

"'Tis optional with yourself, as you know, to relinquish it; send the girl to the only person who should take charge of her, her aunt."

"I could not conscientiously do it, Elton," replied Mrs. Adair, pursing up her mouth and shaking her head mysteriously; "I feel this as a last solemn duty imposed upon me by one in the grave, whom I have ——" She hesitated.

"Injured," he concluded bluntly, "that's what you thought, but don't allow that idea to haunt your susceptible mind, my dear madam" (there was sarcasm in every intonation of his voice;) "believe me, Lincoln quite forgave your jilting him, and his marriage was the proof of it, and with a most amiable woman, with whom he was perfectly happy for years."

"He couldn't be—he couldn't be!" almost shrieked Mrs. Adair in her energy, "for was she not an Indian?"

"Do you mean to say a black woman?" inquired the hitherto silently attentive Mrs. Bruce. "How very horrible!"

"Pooh, nonsense!" answered Mr. Elton, "colour is nothing; the devil, you know, is never as black as he

is painted. Mrs. Lincoln was, I hear, an exceedingly handsome half-caste Creole—whatever you please; nevertheless the daughter may be black, I grant you."

"I am quite in the dark," said Mrs. Bruce, advancing her chair nearer, as if to facilitate the action of the telegraphic wires on her aural faculties—all electricity, and prepared for any shock.

"Ay, 'tis a *black* business!" laughed Mr. Elton.

"Don't laugh," said Mrs. Adair, sentimentally sighing; "I am sure I am a persecuted and most wretched creature."

"All your own fault! You can cast off the charge if you please; but then you know you lose £300 a year, and the rich presents accompanying Mariam Lincoln!"

"What a painful thing it must have been for that poor creature whom Lincoln so rashly married," softly sighed Mrs. Adair again, with a look of girlish consciousness, "to have been obliged to submit, as of course she was, to his calling her daughter 'Mariam;' he could not decently have named her exactly like me, 'Maria.' Poor Mrs. Lincoln! for of course she knew of his fatal attachment; doubtless it shortened her days!"

"On my life!" exclaimed Mr. Elton, hastily rising, and then as quickly reseating himself; "you ladies would drive a quiet matter-of-fact man, like myself, mad with your sentiment. Pardon me, I am very blunt, but 'tis time, for the sake of this unhappy girl who is coming, to set things right. First of all, my dear madam, disabuse yourself—Mariam is a very common

gave him a sidelong, significant look, which the other seemed fully to understand; for, throwing himself back in his easy-chair, he said carelessly, lest the thing might seem premeditated—"I'm sure I wish, mother, you would make up your mind not to let this Hindoo, Parsee, Mahratta, or whatever she may be, come here, for I foresee all sorts of annoyances arising like distant spectres. She will be no Christian, depend upon it—girls always lean to their mother's way of thinking; she will come over accompanied by cages of hideous reptiles and monkeys, objects of her impious adoration, or else a Bramah bull, which she will expect you to have tame about the house like a lapdog."

"How very ridiculously you talk, Richard," said his mother, fidgeting on her chair; "the girl *must* be a Christian; Lincoln always went scrupulously to church."

"But how do you know what his wife made him do?"

"What a very disagreeable position you *are* placed in, my dearest friend!" exclaimed Mrs. Bruce.

"If it were *only* a Bramah bull," said Elton, taking up the thread of the discourse, "that might easily be arranged, by sending the animal into your park at the Grange. But, jesting apart, I see no end to all the annoyances which may arise to your discomfort; but let me advise you to send her to Mrs. Wilton's."

"Annoyances!" chimed in Richard; "nuisances of all sorts, which, as a woman of just feeling, you will have to bear."

"What can you mean?" asked she, in evident trepidation.

"Well, I mean you cannot forbid the girl seeing her relations; it would be most unjust to do so. Some day or other she will be claimed as niece, or something of the sort, by those men who go about town beating a tom-tom, whilst they writhe their bodies in what they call dancing, like a boa in ecstasy, or a fit; dressed, by way of costume, in very dirty white overalls, extremely short and equally soiled petticoats, and red jackets, and caps; and these men you will probably find some day sitting on your rose-coloured ottoman, interlacing *your* ward and *their* niece in extremely dirty arms, expressing their satisfaction at the *rencontre* by some melodious strain in Hindustanee, or varying their joy by a characteristic dance, *au* tom-tom, on your velvet carpet."

"How dreadfully disagreeable!" again exclaimed the monotonous Mrs. Bruce.

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Adair, impatiently. "Nothing of the kind *can* occur, I will answer for it."

"Then you'll be an unnatural wretch," said Richard; "and she will curse you by her gods, which means the putting a pet cobra-capella or an over-fed toad in your bed!"

Here Mrs. Adair drew forth an often-perused letter from her pocket, and once again lingered over its pages. It spoke of presents which he, Lincoln, had fondly, even yet, chosen for her—shawls, which native princes had envied; diamonds, which he never should live to behold glittering on her still fair bosom!—it was *all* sentiment. Mrs. Adair glanced in an opposite glass; she was fair forty-five, still fair!—the diamonds clenched

the affair; and when Mrs. Bruce had quitted to seek her "disagreeable husband," as she obligingly called him, "in Kensington Gardens, by connubial appointment," Mrs. Adair positively and peremptorily declared to Elton and Richard, "that she *would* judge for herself, and Mariam Lincoln *should* come as her ward!"

CHAPTER III.

"WHY don't you wish my mother to have this girl as her ward?" asked Richard of Elton, as they quitted the house together.

"Because, somehow I pity this child even without knowing her; between ourselves, Richard (I mean not the slightest affront to your mother, who is an excellent woman at heart), Mrs. Adair is the very last person to whose care I would confide the education of youth, male or female. A pretty mess she has made of Angelina, who is the most incongruous being in existence; without the vigour or energy of man, yet professing thoroughly to despise the rougher sex, and ignorant of every gentler quality which makes a woman so charming."

"On my life," to use Mrs. Bruce's favouritism, "I think my beloved sister the most disagreeable girl I ever met."

"And 'tis to the care of your mother, whose foolish system of education has formed such a one, that this idiot Lincoln sends his orphan daughter!"

"We shall have some funny scenes," said Richard, lashing an imaginary hound with his whip. "What could have induced this lunatic to act so?"

"Simply this. There is a set of persons created who start in life with one solitary idea, or point of character; they begin with, and end with it. The rest of their lives is an interregnum of nothing, dragging life up a hill and pushing it down again; and, when they arrive at the bottom, they pick up their first idea, and hug it unto death!"

"What was Lincoln's?" laughed Richard.

"Sentiment. I knew the fellow well; he was a tall, spare youth, stiff and ungainly in his movements, a sort of man who seems to look uncomfortably at you over his ears, his neck is so stocked up—no-coloured hair, not red, but looking like a flaxen wig, sunburnt from hanging too long neglected on a barber's block in the sun. With all his care—for he studied appearance much, being in love—he never could do more than coax it to lie still and perfectly straight; his complexion matched it to a shade, with a long melancholy nose, sleepy-looking eyes, with just as much life in them as a sheep might have which had gone to rest in Smithfield, and been suddenly awakened from a dream of green fields and clover. He was predestined to a fruitless passion; he was in country quarters, and, of course, fell in love with the handsomest girl in the neighbourhood—your mother. I will not pretend to say which of them was most to blame; he, for believing in any woman's faith who only loved him for his red coat—or your mother, for vowing to be constant without the slightest intention of being so in more than a promised waltz or quadrille. The only certainty is, that she married as good a man as

ever breathed, your father; and Lincoln went to India, 'to die,' as he said, 'of a broken heart;' but in such cases men frequently mistake the 'off side' for the 'near,' as you would technically call it, and die of mullagatawny, curry, and liver."

"Pardon me," answered Richard, "I never use technicalities, so don't malign my better taste. If I said 'off' or 'near,' it would be that they are the only terms in use for expressing left and right in driving."

"Corrected, my boy," replied his companion; "I own that, for one so devoted to horse-flesh, hounds, and the like, you are wonderfully humanized. It is bad enough giving these all your time and thoughts, without bringing the stable in at every word."

"Leave my taste in quiet," responded Richard, "and conclude about this mad Lincoln. Having been absent since the first intimation reached my mother of his last wishes, I am quite in the dark for the most part."

"Briefly, then, he disappeared, not to die in a few short days, as he predicted, but to live upwards of twenty years; and now comes the proof of my theory, that a man begins and ends with the same idea, the rest an interregnum. Lincoln married, about three years after going out, some handsome Creole, with whom, as I have been informed by a brother officer, he lived perfectly happy for fifteen years; she has been dead about four. As soon as she was gone, Lincoln gave himself up to unmitigated grief, until he recovered the lost clue of his first idea, and fell back upon sentiment; and this stupid man winds up as he began, by playing

the fool, and imposing on himself and your mother as a broken-hearted man. To do this, he sends her a pathetic letter, a lock of his hair (I'd give my eyes to see it), and his poor orphan child; instead of playing the part of a sensible man, and sending her to his exemplary sister,—no, he must die in all the odour of a hopeless and romantic love, and send her to your mother."

"On my soul, Elton, I pity the girl," cried Richard warmly.

"So do I; but what can be done? All women have their foibles, and the most rocky one is, the ardent desire of inspiring a hopeless, endless passion. The very best creature that ever wore petticoats has this vein of ferocity in her nature—that she would rejoice in knowing a man's days shortened for love of her, always supposing it not to be by a bullet. And some go the utmost limits of inhumanity, and in their morbid desire for this suicidal food exclaim, 'swords or pistols!' little caring how, so 'tis done for the honour of the thing; and then they sigh, and very quietly lay the unction to their souls that it was no fault of theirs!"

"But my mother is too reasonable not to be persuaded, if seriously undertaken."

"Try it, and you'll find that for all the world she will not forego the pleasure of being a victim to remorse, for having been instrumental in shortening the days of a man who lived twenty-five years, nearly twenty of them in matrimonial bliss, after she broke his heart, by giving her hand to another; and, after all, perhaps, it will be better to leave her in the indulgence of this idea—it may

make the poor girl's fate happier. Take it away, or undermine it, and poor Mariam will be handed over to some pedagogue (for she seems still to cling to this hands-across teaching male and female,) and the gentle care of Angelina."

"Confound Angelina!" heartily exclaimed Richard; "I wish she would marry."

"Be human, my boy, and desire a better fate to one of us, in brotherly love, than ever to call Angelina, though your sister, wife."

"Well, all I can say is, that if she and the Kaffir, her unfading friend, take this poor child in hand, swarth though she may be, I pity, and will protect her."

"I daresay she's a good-looking girl; her mother was handsome I hear, though brown, to speak moderately, I'll make one more effort with your mother quietly, and if I fail, well, then, things must take their course."

Here their roads separated, and the two parted cordially.

"I like that boy," soliloquized Elton, as he moved away; "there is something noble in him; he always reminds me of his father. If that silly mother of his had left him under the care of the man I chose for him, and then afterwards sent him to Eton, he would now be an ornament to any thing he might follow for pleasure or profit. As it is, I fear to curb hastily; but it grieves me to see energies like his cast on a horse's speed, or the coursing of a greyhound, these things lead so swiftly to other follies; but a strict hand mars Dick—a kind one, judiciously advanced, may

make him. I must try and find such a one; and he walked homewards."

As for Dick, as he termed him, he was quite capable of finding hands for himself; whether he always selected judiciously, time will prove.

When he quitted Elton, he sauntered quietly off towards his stables, and, mounting his favourite horse, turned its head towards Highgate.

There was a quiet-looking half cottage, half house, near a certain lane in this locality, and before this mechanically stopped Richard's horse. No servant accompanied him—no boy in buttons rushed out to take his steed; so he dismounted, and, passing the bridle through a ring in the wall, rang the bell. There was a brass plate on the door, and on it you read—"Mr. Bateman, Classical and Mathematical Tutor."

A servant answered the door, looking very much as if some mathematical instrument was sadly required to make her mind encompass the thought that cleanliness is beautiful in woman. She replied to Richard's question by saying—"Yes, they was in;" leaving him to discover whether she actually meant they had been and were gone out, or, with ungrammatical want of justice, flinging the burden of the present on the past.

Richard resolved to elucidate the mystery himself; possibly he was well acquainted with the privileges of her mode of speech, for he brushed past her, and rapping at a parlour door, looking into a garden at the back of the house, said—"May I come in?"

At the same time, turning the lock and entering, he found himself in a very neat little sitting-room, one window of which looked into the garden. On the sill were some flowers in pots, veiling by their height the limited size of the ground beyond, and bidding the room, that wintry day, look cheerful and glad. On a table in the centre were books, mathematical instruments, and all the paraphernalia of a tutor, now absent; and at another smaller table, placed close to the window, sat a fair-haired girl of about eighteen, busily engaged sketching. As he entered, she sprang up hastily and joyfully to meet him.

"Hallo, Kate, always at work!" and "Oh, Richard, how glad I am to see you!" burst simultaneously from both as he clasped her proffered hand warmly. This was another of Mrs. Adair's educational errors. She had been delighted to hear Bateman had an only child, whose mother had died in giving her birth, for this girl could accompany her father to the Grange, the year Richard was left there under his charge; she was only two years his junior, and would make an excellent companion for him; besides, it carried out her plan of ideas as regarded early companionship with the opposite sex, to fortify a woman and refine a man. Really one would have imagined that nature, finding herself greatly at fault, had delegated Mrs. Adair with the heavy charge of amending her errors or omissions. Accordingly, Richard and Kate Bateman had passed a year together in perfect liberty. He had looked upon her as a sister then; and it was not until he returned after his travelling on the Conti-

nent, that he remembered the pretty girl, who blushed when he embraced her on their reunion, was in point of fact nothing to him, the thought was not at all displeasing, she being far too pretty for a mere sister.

Bateman was the very dullest man in the world in the world's ways; with a head full of schemes, to which his toil as a tutor was the stepping-stone, by the means it afforded him of carrying out his brain's bubbles, how could he think of any thing so purely matter of fact as his daughter's danger from too unreserved an intimacy with a man like young Adair? On the contrary, he threw them together, not from the slightest thought of possible good to her future prospects arising out of it, but because it was so natural they should like one another. He liked Richard, so of course she must; and Richard, he felt assured, liked both of them, and so on they could all jog as far as their roads lay together, and then shake hands and part, perhaps for ever, at the finger-post directing their separate routes; but he overlooked the possible result, that the bodies might part, and one or both hearts go breaking on its life's journey, or else in open rebellion dare its fellow to leave it, and dash recklessly down the road called ruin. Bateman saw nothing of this; he never for one instant dreamed that Richard's visits would have been less frequent had Kate been absent. No, he held him up as a model to all his rebellious pupils as the one whose friendship survived castigations, and all other obligations from his tutor, though, goodness knows, little of the former had Richard ever received from him.

"And what are you doing now, Kate?" he said, seating himself in the chair, and looking at her drawing, while she leaned over his shoulder, on which rested one little white hand in perfect confidence, and the freedom of an innocent mind.

"Don't you think I have much improved, dear Richard?" asked she.

"Very much—that is, as far as I am competent to be a judge; that's just like the old oak at the Grange we used to sit under when I felt tired, and you used to read me to sleep after a day's sport—cub-hunting—in early autumn. I fancy I see it now; and, when I woke up, I always found your handkerchief over my eyes to shade them, and your arm under my head, dear little Kate!"

Here the handsome man looked up with his deep loving eyes in the face of the pretty girl hanging over him, and the two little hands, in perfect innocence of thought, clasped round his neck. "Dear Kate," he said again, and his arm stole round her waist, as a brother might clasp a sister; with the other, he commenced turning over the portfolio of drawings. Kate had one long curl at either side of her fair temple, and this curl touched Richard's cheek as she stooped over him; once or twice he brushed it away, but it returned as quickly again to be driven back. We speak of this, to show how little either then thought of the passion possibly dormant in their hearts; for he chid away that which a lover would have pressed to an ardent lip.

"Oh, Kate!" he said at last, almost impatiently, "put back your hair—it fidgets me; there," he cried, as he himself turned the offending ringlet over her ear; "that's better, and I'm sure you look much prettier with it so."

"Do I? then I'll always wear it thus to please you; arrange the other side, Richard;" and the girl knelt down on an ottoman at his feet, holding up her baby face for his hand to adorn it. She did so at first calmly, as if she were fifty, not eighteen. But we cannot go beyond a certain point with impunity. And these baby faces are very dangerous things; they merge the child in the woman, as in a lulling sleep, and when we may have ventured far beyond child's play, an awaking moment comes, and the sad woman's face alone remains, shaded by her sorrows, perhaps guilt! As he obeyed her, he looked on this sweet face smiling upon him, and then he noticed the fine little ear, now fully disclosed; then the red parted lips, showing the white teeth, from the position of the neck thrown back; and, seeing this, Richard leaned down, and, taking the head in both hands, gave her a warm, affectionate embrace, from which she shrank; and, struggling to her feet, stood before him blushing deeply, and now there was no curl on the cheek to hide it. He laughed, and coloured too, and then seizing both her hands, asked her "Why she blushed?" Kate did not reply, but the blush deepened, and, becoming a flush, rested in evidence of their hearts' awakening; for from that day Kate never knelt at his

feet in childish confidence, nor as a sister clasped his neck.

Richard rode thoughtfully home, and *his* musing fit, and *Kate's* blushes, both sped off into the unseen future, to crown his mother's good intentions—a frostwork of thorns.

CHAPTER IV.

READER! Have you ever met with a young woman who, despite her youth, bore that stamp upon her which involuntarily makes you feel that she was cut out for an old maid in Nature's studio of statuary?—cut out in cold grey granite, rigid and heart-chilling to look upon—whose clothes seem swathed around this chiselled block of stone, like the bandages of an Egyptian mummy, out of which enfolding, drop long, pale, thin hands, with nails of scrupulous exactness in length? Toes are first seen propelling forward this sad body, without the slightest undulation of figure, it seems this same granite statue on a truck; then uprises the long, meagre neck, crowned by the cold, unwelcoming face, from which every passion and feeling fly, whether of love, sympathy, or kindliness; the face is a frozen surface, from which they would glide into the cold waters of oblivion for evermore! Such a being was Angelina: not a tinge of colour ever crossed her cheek, no one had ever seen her smile except in scorn or derision, and then the cold blue lips, shrunken and thin, parted, and the face made a wrinkled grimace; the eyes were of a cold, unchanging greenish-grey; the hair, what colour could it be but white? There seemed no blood in that frame to colour

it deeper; it was a cold, sickly flaxen, without the slightest gloss, and this hung in long, lank curls down either side of her cheek—she conceived it beneath the dignity of her great acquirements to study or care for appearance; yet in this too there was conceit. She looked in her glass, and thought that her pale, studious countenance must win some kindred soul; she fancied her statue-like appearance in accordance with her classical mind. Angelina never for an instant dreamed that any one could do other than admire, though they might dread and shun, her superiority! She had no ambition to be the sun; no, the pale, chaste, lovely moon was she (in her own opinion.)

One day, about a fortnight after the events recorded in our first pages, this Angelina sat in the drawing-room in Eaton Square, reading. It would very little interest our readers to know her study; we do not profess a knowledge of classics ourselves, and we will hope that those of our sex reading us, have too feminine tastes to care if it were Homer, Ovid, or any other Greek or Latin author. The rougher sex must either pardon and pity our ignorance, or else thank us for not reminding them, too forcibly perhaps, of many a nauseous draught, the wholesome medicine of the mind, which they engulfed at school or college.

Some such draught Angelina sat sipping, and dipping into the same cup was Miss Caffir. This lady's classical taste had been like an olivian one; at the first essay she disliked the fruit amazingly, but when she discovered that its brackishness was like attic salt, giv-

ing zest to the wine-cup of existence, she tasted again, and ended by *almost* liking it. Having merely professed, on entering Mrs. Adair's family, to teach the rudiments of a classical education, just fitted for little boys, she soon, in the keenness of her nature, discovered that Angelina had a decided taste for such food, and that, by ministering to it, she might secure a firm rock, whereon to build a house of refuge for the future, with Angelina's mamma; so by under study herself she kept well a-head of her pupil, and now her hopes were crowned with success. Angelina never was happier than in a classical day with her dear Miss Caffir. In appearance—but we need not describe her—she was another of the meagre genius. Verily, persons fed on the dead languages never grow plump nor thrive like those nourished among the living.

On this day the two sat side by side in dalliance with some favourite page, Mrs. Adair sat apart reading too; but shame on the degenerated taste, mother—of such a daughter!—she was reading a mere English novel!

Richard was absent at some hunting lodge for a few days; Elton, too, had not visited Eaton Square that day. There was a gentle calm around as the bright fire crackled and blazed in the ample grate, and cold November stalked out of doors clad in mist, rain, and yellow fog; is was a frightful day in which to visit London for the first time, especially for a stranger and an orphan. But we will not anticipate events.

With all her coldness, and peculiarity of dress and

manner, Angelina dearly loved expense and show; and thought it nothing incompatible with her classical appearance, to drape the statue in Thibet shawls and golden tissues! Thus, she too advocated the acceptance of the trust by Lieutenant Lincoln imposed, (Captain, however, at the time of his death.) Moreover, a certain something in Angelina told her that Mariam was destined to call dormant energies of hers to life; so the girl-victim was shortly expected.

It had been so arranged by dead Lincoln, that this his living child should be cast afloat to seek a home under the immediate charge of an ayah, her Indian maid and nurse; a brother officer had been entrusted to see them off to England, under the care of the captain of the vessel, homeward bound. It would only be known when they arrived in England, whether Mrs. Adair accepted or rejected the guardianship, and then, in the latter case, the living freight was to be dropped at Mrs. Wilton's door, Russell Square. It was a very pretty arrangement for any sane man to make, for the sake of leaving behind him an overpowering, muskish odour of sentiment!

A word of introduction for Mrs. Wilton; 'tis a dry business, and the sooner concluded the better.

This lady had been left a widow with two children (girls), at the age of five-and-twenty; she was now in her thirty-first year, her girls nine and ten. It would seem reasonable to believe that all the wit of the Lincoln family had been expended upon her; for it would be difficult to find a person of more sterling good sense,

allied to cleverness, than Mrs. Wilton. Some persons have a mania for coupling all their friends; innumerable had been the efforts to lead her, drive her, coax her, any thing, so she again entered into the often rugged road of Hymen.

To all she replied, "I shall never marry again, I am too doubtful of my own wayward heart. I might love my husband very dearly, and, as a matter of course, his children, if Heaven sent us the olive branches; and God forbid I should give a stepfather to Wilton's girls, and possibly become an unjust mother myself. The heart has so many mazes, we never can be sure of steering clearly through them, and I might become sophist enough to think I was doing my duty by them, and at the same time acting unjustly."

"But you need companionship," said one.

"Pardon me, my girls are even now companions to me, and every day becoming more sensible; I have society, too, apart from them."

"But they will grow up, marry, and leave you."

"A good loving mother lives again in her children's children; pray, allow me to remain single."

And this woman, handsome enough to have many admirers, went calmly, but not unlovingly on her way. She argued that a well-educated mother was the fittest governess for her *girls*—not boys; and the early hours of the day were all devoted to this task of love. Task to them or her is scarcely the term. They were taught in love and gentleness; and, while few children of their years could be met with so well informed,

none ever looked more lightly on learning, so happily had it been inculcated, and not alone by books, but by example, truthfulness, and fearlessness in every thought and act. She was a model mother; as a woman, the most disagreeable person for a coterie of scandal votaries, she must ask so many ridiculous questions. Were any one held up to suspicion, any gentle fame whispered over, she would inquire, and loudly too, for authority—whoever dreamed of any thing so absurd? and, by her questionings and doubtings, she ended by diluting the otherwise perfect tale so much, that the weak thing fell fainting to the earth; no one had courage to raise it up, all its spirit was gone. Was any afflicted, beaten down—she stretched forth a hand. Was any purse-proud—she walked them forth, the rotten idol of wood in its gilt crust, which peeled off at her touch, showing the naked ugliness of the wooden thing.

This was the woman, the idiot Lincoln eschewed as guardian to his orphan child. It might have been that, as she was his younger sister by so many years, and knowing little of her save by report or letter, he had not a perfect knowledge of her worth. Let us give him the benefit of the better thought.

CHAPTER V.

THE hour was two. A very gloomy day without; every one looked miserable as they hurried through the drizzling rain. Mrs. Adair had once raised her head from the book she was reading, to wonder "when that tiresome girl would arrive, and thus enable them to quit town for the Grange—town was fearfully dull."

To this speech no one responded. Had she spoken in Greek or Hebrew it might have been different; but to leave these languages for mere common English, 'twas absurd to expect it, so a dead silence of some moments followed. What the two students were thinking of, we care little to know; but Mrs. Adair's mind wandered from the book she was reading to India shawls, then back to the volume for awhile, to rush off pell-mell again into £300 a year, and the use she should make of this addition to an already handsome jointure.

"A beautiful passage!" fell at length from Angelina's lips.

"I should question it much," quickly responded her mother, delighted to hear a human voice; "at this season of the year, one generally hears of frightful shipwrecks and accidents. I sincerely hope nothing has happened to her!"

Miss Caffir was about to explain the passage of which they had been speaking.

"Never mind, mamma," muttered the dutiful Angelina, "she's always thinking and speaking on the old subject. I'm quite weary of it!" and another dead silence ensued, broken only by the crackling fire, or turning over of book-leaves, with an ocasional yawn from mamma. On a sudden there came a low, dull, rumbling sound through the almost deserted square. Had any one been standing at the window, they would have perceived that almost unknown thing, a hackney coach, slowly driving round, the driver looking at every door, every number, as if all sense of calculation were gone; for he had been told to drive to—(one in its teens)—and there he was counting step by step, from Number 4! His intellect seemed worn and out of date, like his coach. At last he stopped; it was at Mrs. Adair's. Down he struggled; one mass of dingy capes and an oil-skin hat, made the man, the rest was a mystery. Up the steps, plodded this moving problem of wet cloth, then rose and fell the knocker, one hollow blow, followed by half a dozen younger ones, younger, smaller, more sprightly. "Ring the bell," stared him in the face; he was far too grateful at having been chosen before half a dozen modern cabs, to refuse any request in moderation, so he gave so strong a pull that the wire broke, and the handle remained in his hand; he looked at it a moment, and then quietly seating it on the step, shook his head at it, as if it were looking up upon him reproachfully. Whilst he was doing this, the drawing-room was in one loud palpitation, one simultaneous

shriek had burst from all at the startling summons, and like a second Babel, a confusion of tongues bespoke their wild terror; then all rose and rushed to the window.

"Caffir, dear," said Angelina, drawing back her dear friend after the first momentary and natural impulse of curiosity, "my presentiments do not deceive me; 'tis that girl! Do not let us forget *our* dignity if others do!" and she glanced angrily at her mother, who heard nothing, saw nothing, but a man's face eagerly watching the hall door from the window of the hackney coach. Angelina's speech will serve to shew two things; first that she assumed the masculine mode of treating her friend as man does man—she eschewed the miss: it did not yield sufficient force to her friendship for the other; and then "that girl," and "my presentiments," already betokened dislike.

Mrs. Adair stood at the window; Miss Caffir would have given her eyes to look out, but she durst not, and, casting them up in solemn reprehension of Mrs. Adair's want of dignity, she clasped Angelina's hand. At that moment a servant opened the door, and solicited an audience for a Mr. Blair, of the ship Hercules.

"That's the vessel she was to sail in," joyously exclaimed Mrs. Adair, not noticing the looks of her daughter. "Show him up, Wilks."

Angelina half moved towards the door, dragging her friend with her; she felt offended at this unceremonious meeting with some low creature! However, the almost perfect of us have a flaw; even her dignity gave way to curiosity, and she sank on a sofa, dragging the other

after her, and thus they sat like two statues when Mr. Blair walked in.

He bowed round, and then briefly stated that the Hercules had landed her passengers that morning at Gravesend; and the captain, under whose charge Miss Lincoln had been placed, had immediately sent him, a subordinate officer, to town with the young lady and her maid, he being unable himself to quit the vessel. "I am commissioned," he continued, "to ask madam whether you accept the charge; if not, I am to accompany Miss Lincoln to her aunt's, Mrs. Wilton."

"A most singular method of proceeding!" dropped from Angelina, echoed by Miss Caffir.

"These are my orders," continued Mr. Blair. "Captain Todd will settle the rest when he calls, which he desired me to say would be in a day or two."

"Is Miss Lincoln in that coach at the door?" asked Mrs. Adair.

"She is, madam, and her maid."

"Oh, I keep her, of course!" was the final decision, as if some animal were in question; "let her be brought up directly. By the way, has her luggage come with her?"

She was thinking of the bribe to take this poor orphan—the presents!

"The heavy luggage," replied Mr. Blair, "will be forwarded. Miss Lincoln has but little with her."

"Thank you; then she had better come up at once."

Mr. Blair moved towards the door; he seemed annoyed. A manly look of disgust came over the open

countenance of the sailor. He paused in his going, turned, glanced at the statues on the couch, and then said—"I beg pardon if I seem intrusive, madam, but Miss Lincoln made many friends on board—I may call myself an humble one; I would do any thing to serve her." And the sunburnt honest face glowed with the energetic words—"I hope—that is," he hastily added, "Captain Todd bade me mention, for she has been more than three months under his care, that Miss Lincoln won the regards of all by her kindness and amiability, and he hoped, and we all hope, she may be fully appreciated here, an orphan in a strange land!"

"My mother, sir," said Angelina, speaking for the first time, "needs no one to dictate a rule of conduct to her!"

"Neither do I presume," he replied, bowing coldly. "I only solicited a kind reception for this orphan at the request of my captain." He seemed, indeed, to doubt it as he quitted the room.

Again Mrs. Adair is at the window, and this time Angelina and Miss Caffir, subduing all pride, are there also.

Not a word is spoken for at least a minute—an age in such a case. The first breath had vent in a suppressed cry from the three; so engrossed were they by the thought of Mariam, that the ayah was quite forgotten. Mr. Blair descended, opened the coach door, and then, only then, a head advanced. It needed no gentle touch of Angelina's predisposed love to call it black and ugly. It was a perfect negro face in appear-

ance, nothing of the Indian—low, narrow forehead, woolly hair, nostrils looking east and west, lips inside out, which, in a broad grin, displayed a range of teeth such as only blacks possess, so white and shining; on the head was a showy handkerchief, nationally arranged. The simultaneous exclamation of "What a wretch!" "The horrid fright!" and lastly, Mrs. Adair's, "Take her away, I won't have her!" for this vision, for a fashionable chaperon, conquered all desire for Thibet shawls and diamonds. But the words were unheard. The unconscious woman grinned in Mr. Blair's face, then stretched forth a foot—a frightful thing to be so called—and then as suddenly drew it back, and grinned again. She was quite innocent of a hackney coach's ways, and how to use them; she did not well seem to understand how, if she advanced one leg down a step, the other would follow it safely on those slanting stairs to earth, off whose surface all carpeting had long since been worn, and only iron remained. Again she advanced a foot, then rising, gave a chuckling laugh, and, jumping out, landed on the flags, much in the form of what children call a "Dutch cheese," where she rested an instant, one lump of shawls, &c. This was the sad orphan! but no, another form rises in the coach, and this one Blair lifts gently but hastily out, and almost carries up the steps. A sigh of relief heaved Mrs. Adair's bosom, the first was the ayah!

"'Tis the servant," said Angelina; "you never can keep that creature in your house, madam; you must

send her back." Before she could reply, Wilks threw open the door, and Lieutenant Blair entered again, leading in Mariam Lincoln. With all their erudition, Angelina and Miss Caffir forgot the difference between a half Indian girl of fifteen and an English one; Mrs. Adair naturally thought of her as of a child to be sent to school. Great, then, was the amazement of all when a woman stood before them, and looking more so from the enfoldings of shawls and cloaks. How describe her? As she entered, her gait was slow and languid; eastern in every movement, characterised by the dignity of *nonchalance*. It would have been too European for her to feel abashed, and then in every heart the inward monitor tells us if we have been rightly and kindly treated; the girl, too, like those accustomed from natural langour, or voluptuousness of climate, to speak little, was prone to read the countenance. She had read disappointment and annoyance in Blair's, and her inward monitor said, "It would have been more kindly done to have come down to welcome and receive you."

With this feeling uppermost, she, the once spoilt child of a doting father, concealed her sensation of bitterness and sorrow, in a stern, proud look, which made that young face more aged and rigid in expression.

Mariam was not a wild Indian, as they had seemed inclined to anticipate, but one who, from her father's position—he having held for years a high situation in the civil service—had mixed in much society, and had known its laws from infancy.

Blair led her gently in. A large cloak, evidently some man's, possibly his own, to guarantee her against the cold and wet, was fastened round her neck, and trailed after her in long heavy folds like a train, giving her increased dignity of mien, though rather burlesqued, like a child playing queen. The figure beneath was wrapped in a large shawl, and the hands gloved almost like those of a Parisian, shewing how very tiny they were, as one held her shawl across her bosom, whilst the other was clasped in Blair's. On her head she wore a close straw bonnet, a mere travelling one, crossed with a black ribbon; and now we come to the face. All we have described, Angelina took in in a glance of bleak dislike and envy.

Who has not noticed the extreme beauty of some of the Indian faces in London?—those very men who, as Richard had predicted, would claim Mariam as niece? Such a face was hers—not so dark, but the olive brunette of a perfectly Spanish complexion. The same large, veiled, dark-hazel, not black eyes, of the high-caste native, aquiline nose, and firm, well-formed lip; and down her neck hung masses of raven, true raven hair, in natural curls; behind her came in the ayah, her face lit up with a broad grin! Poor ayah! *She* had come rejoicing in novelty; her mistress felt nothing new *could* compensate for the old—a father's and mother's love. No one welcomed Mariam; so Mariam, forgetting herself in this chilling reception, felt shy and awkward; and, hanging back from Blair's advancing arm, gazed on the group before her.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair. "This cannot be Captain Lincoln's daughter!—he was so very fair!" She forgot her first fears of a perfectly black girl.

"It must be some imposture!" cried Angelina. "Why, this girl is at least five-and-twenty!"

They had all expected to see a thin, miserable, dwarfish child, of not above twelve in appearance, shrivelled up by heat of climate.

Mariam looked a moment petrified, then putting up one hand, unloosened the heavy cloak, and gasped for breath; its weight and her reception choked her.

"Mrs. Adair," said her conductor sternly, not appearing to notice the words, and hastening to cover the poor girl's emotion—he felt her tremble—"I have the honour to present you Miss Lincoln."

"Is it *really* Miss Lincoln?" asked Mrs. Adair, still incredulously. "Why, she is quite a young woman!" And she advanced towards her. Mrs. Adair was not a bad-hearted, but a very silly, weak woman.

"Take me away—take me back!" whispered the girl to Blair, shrinking from the advancing welcomer.

"What does she say?" inquired Angelina.

"She seems far too free in her manners with this young man," whispered Miss Caffir to her friend. An acquiescent nod was the reply.

"Miss Lincoln, madam," said Blair, speaking with difficulty, he felt so indignant, "is naturally a little embarrassed among strangers, and the fatigue of a long journey. Would it not be better, just for the present, to send her to her aunt, Mrs. Wilton? I will take her with pleasure."

He did not know any thing of this latter lady, but felt any where would be better than here; he drew her gently back as he spoke towards the door. Her cloak had fallen to the ground; she receded gently and lightly over it, and the eye lit up with a faint hope, though still fixed almost in fear on the cold group before her.

"Dear me, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, still advancing, and grasping the hand which involuntarily shrunk from hers. "She will be very happy here, I am sure. I was taken by surprise at first. I expected to see a child; I cannot now quite comprehend it."

"You would do well to see some proof of her identity," suggested Angelina, "before burdening yourself with her." Blair turned pale, then coloured deeply.

"Pray, permit me to take Miss Lincoln to her aunt," he asked, anxiously. "Nature will cry to nature; she, I am sure, will receive her niece gladly."

"Not at all!" answered Mrs. Adair. "We shall understand each other perfectly soon; but she is so unlike her father—her mother must have been *very* dark! Come, my dear," this was said to Mariam, "don't shrink away from me; we will make you quite comfortable. Don't look so sad; are you fatigued? Will you take a glass of wine and a biscuit?"

With all her efforts, Mrs. Adair could not give the touch of feeling to her speech which would have won the poor girl's confidence. A glass of wine and a biscuit, and not one caress to the orphan stranger!

"Nothing, thank you, madam," was the tremulous reply.

"I dare say the girl's an epicure," sneered Angelina, in an audible whisper, "and will expect hot tiffins of curry, and feel disgusted with English living."

"Then you can leave her, Mr.——I forget your name," said Mrs. Adair, dropping the hand she had scarcely touched, and falling back; "and perhaps that person," pointing by gesture to the ayah, who, comprehending but very imperfectly the scene, had crept to her young mistress's side, "had better remain a day or two, to reconcile her to the change, and Captain Todd, when he comes, can take her back; I will provide an attendant for Miss Lincoln."

"Send Leah away from me!" exclaimed Mariam, her eyes and face kindling; "I shall die if she leave me!" and, turning towards the humble friend of years, she flung both arms around her neck, and burst into tears; they were tears worthy her home—large, burning, heavy drops, from clouds weeping over coming storms.

"There's temper!" ejaculated Angelina; "she will require severe coercion."

"No, no!" said Leah, shaking her head in defiance, as she hugged the girl to her heart; "me no go—me no leave my Bibi Missy."

"I believe Mrs. Adair," said Blair, struggling to be calm, and chary for the girl's sake among so many rocks, "Captain Lincoln, so I have been given to understand, has made it an especial proviso that this servant shall remain with her young mistress."

An angry discussion followed this announcement,

which ended in the affair being left in doubt until the will should be consulted. The first passionate flood of tears shed, Mariam rose from Leah's neck strengthened, and prepared for sorrow, and, taking Blair's hand, most kindly thanked him for all his attention and thought for her comfort; and with the ease of a woman allied to a child's gentleness and timidity, hoped they should meet soon again, and often. With such a hope and prayer, how often we part from some genial spirit crossing our path, and never meet again!

The others looked on with various emotions; they were still governed by surprise, at this child of their brain's creation.

Thus Blair and Mariam parted, while Leah, in homely warmth, shook his hand; bowing coldly to the others, he followed Wilks down-stairs, with a heavy heart for the orphan girl.

CHAPTER VI.

THE luggage is in the hall, the hackney coach gone, and in it Blair. A servant opens the drawing-room door, to inquire whether Miss Lincoln's boxes shall be taken up to her room? At this question, the almost silence which had followed Blair's departure was broken, for Mrs. Adair had been whispering to the other two to give Mariam time to recover herself; it was kindly intended, like all she did, but not judiciously, for it gave an appearance of estrangement from the poor girl, not intended. "Of course," answered Mrs. Adair, turning round delighted at the interruption. "And—stop, Wilks" (this was to the departing man), "tell Mrs.——but no, I'll go myself. Come, my dear" (to Mariam), "I will take you to your room, and I daresay we shall soon be better acquainted." As she spoke, advancing, she took one of the poor girl's trembling hands.

"Surely, madam," cried Angelina, looking up haughtily—but she generally looked thus—"you are not going to usurp the place of your housekeeper? Pray, do not so much forget what is due to yourself! Surely if Mrs. Denham is worthy enough to show your

usual guests to their rooms, she may content Miss Lincoln!"

Mrs. Adair dropped the girl's hand, and said to Wilks, "Tell Mrs. Denham to come here. Sit down, my dear," this was to Mariam; "you will find Mrs. Denham an exceedingly nice person, and she will see that your room shall have every comfort!"

Mrs. Denham entered, the portrait of a London housekeeper. A cold-looking brown satin dress, rather scanty, and a blonde cap, with nondescript flowers in the borders, set on a stiff unturnable head, and decking the primmest face in the world. She glanced aside at the new-comers; she saw they were shivering in the cold bath of their reception, so she threw in a pailful of ice in a—"This way, if you please, miss!" and (to her mistress), "Please, ma'am, what am I to do with this person?" looking scornfully at Leah; "she was not expected, I think."

"My nurse will remain in my own room," answered Mariam, in as firm a tone as her emotions permitted, looking sternly at the rigid Mrs. Denham, who stood aghast at her assurance, before Miss Angelina too, whom every one feared. "Come Leah, dear," continued the girl, in a soft, gentle tone, turning towards her humble friend; and then she slowly quitted the room, thus accompanied, to the amazement of all, at her dignified manner.

An hour elapsed. What was said in that time in bitterness against her, it is not necessary to record; but

in the midst of it the door opened, and in walked Richard, the truant.

"What!" he cried, "all assembled in council! Whom are you sitting upon? How are you, ma'am?" and he advanced to embrace his parent. Angelina never said, "How d'ye do?" or "Good bye," when he came or went, unless they were forced from her. These little ordinary civilities of life were quite beneath her superiority over her brother.

Mrs. Adair generally rose joyously to embrace her well-beloved son; to-day she shrank pettishly from him, exclaiming, "Upon my word, Richard, I have reason to thank you for your dutiful attention to my wishes! Four days since you promised to return, and certainly I might *at least* expect this much of respect from you!"

"Dear mother," he answered laughing, and trying to kiss her despite herself, "what have I done? *only* four days after my time! I'm sure it isn't much! and the ground in such capital condition for hunting!" Richard was right, neither was it much for a man, especially a huntsman, in damp November weather, when the scent lies so beautifully on the ground! He felt her injustice keenly.

"And there," she said at last, delighted to have found an excellent pretext for her anger, "is the grey horse I was so very anxious to have your opinion about as a match for 'Peacock' gone—sold; they kept it a day for me."

"Never mind, mother," he said coaxingly, securing a

reluctant hand at last, which he patted and kissed, as he dropped into a chair beside her. "I'll find you a better match to-morrow."

Richard was very fond of his mother, though not blind to her faults, and he had almost enticed her into good-humour when Angelina burst forth with a sarcasm. Though well used to these, he saw something must be very wrong, all were so cross. Somehow of late he had traced all ill temper as connected with the coming of Mariam; this now again struck him.

"What the deuce is the matter with you all?" he asked. "Is there any bad news of the Hercules? Are all the shawls and diamonds gone to decorate the whales and porpoises? I say nothing of Blackey; she's of no consequence."

"Once for all, Richard," answered his mother, enchanted with this legitimate cause for anger, "I will NOT allow you to call *my* ward by that odious title; I beg I may not hear it again, especially as it cannot but hurt and offend her feelings."

"Miss Lincoln arrived an hour since, and has just gone with Mrs. Denham to her room," hazarded Miss Caffir, unable to refuse herself the pleasure of being the first to tell it.

"Arrived!" he cried, dropping his mother's hand, which he had retained despite her struggles, and rising coldly from his seat, while a rigid look of surprise and pain crossed his fine face. "Arrived! gone with Mrs. Denham, the housekeeper, to her room! Oh, mother!" and he turned reproachfully towards her. In less than

a minute he had taken the whole affair in review. He forgot the transition for this poor child had been gradual. He made one leap from India—her glowing, native country, with all its riches and charms to her—to Eaton Square on this bleak November day, with Angelina to withhold his mother from all kindness, and the formal housekeeper to shew her her room—for he, too, thought of her only as a child. The keenest pang of compassionate sorrow he had ever felt passed through his really good heart. One stride took him to the door, one spring up the stairs, and he stood at Mariam's chamber.

"She is only a child—a little puny girl!" thus he thought of her in his mind; so with her there needed no ceremony. He heard Mrs. Denham's voice, and, flinging open the door, hastily entered.

"So, my poor little girl," he said, both arms outstretched to welcome her; he had been going to add, "You've arrived at last; how are you? can I do any thing for you?" but as he entered, Mariam turned hastily round; she had cast off shawl and bonnet, and the dark handsome face looked in amazement, as the ear brought a kind tone to light it up. Never was a man more surprised than Richard; he half drew back and coloured, then as suddenly advancing, said, "Forgive my unceremonious intrusion, I expected to see a child; are you Miss Lincoln?"

"Yes, I am," she gently answered, and the first smile in that cold house crossed her cheek.

"I'm very glad to see you," he replied, taking her hand. "Can I do any thing to make you feel at home?

Pray, command me, are you fatigued? Won't you take something? Let Mrs. Denham send you some refreshment up here—pray, go, and do so;" and the amazed and angry housekeeper, crushed in the condescending part she was playing to Mariam, found herself waved from the room by one she durst not disobey. Mariam was almost crying with emotion at this unexpected kindness.

"Who are you?" she articulated in a trembling tone, looking him full in the face, as though to read his soul, almost in fear of deception.

"Oh! I forgot, you don't know me: I am Dick Adair —so my friends call me—just come from the country; a rough fellow you see; but never mind that, I dare say you'll know me better soon." As he spoke, he saw the tears gradually filling the poor orphan's eyes. "And who is that?" he asked, turning towards Leah to divert her thoughts, "your ayah, I suppose?"

"My dear nurse and friend," answered the friendless girl.

"I'm glad she has come with you; you must not leave your mistress" he said, turning to Leah; "we'll make you comfortable here."

"Me no leave Missy Mariam, not me," answered the woman, shewing all her white teeth in a broad grin of gratitude.

"I hear Mrs. Denham and the tray," cried he, dropping Mariam's hand after a hearty pressure; then turning to Leah, not to appear cognizant of the tears his kind words had called forth, he said, "Now, what's your

name? Oh—Leah, is it? Help me to unburden this table of all its load," and away flew across the room on a sofa, sundry books of Angelina's choosing for Mariam's study, and a round little table was drawn towards the fire, just struggling into brightness, and on this table was placed the tray, which a quiet-looking servant brought in—Mrs. Denham was too angry to return herself.

Mrs. Adair sat awhile wondering what Richard could be about! Unable to bear a longer suspense, she crept up-stairs, and entering the room, which was a dressing-room preceding the bed-chamber, she found her son and Mariam side by side; a charming fire, a pleasantly and softly lighted lamp on the table (remember reader it was four o'clock, in November), and he, coaxing her to eat, as though they were acquaintances of months, while Leah laughed with glee to see her poor child looking almost happy!

"Ah!" he cried, looking up, but not moving, "here is my dear mother come to see if you are comfortable, Miss Lincoln! I told you," he continued, addressing his parent and giving her a significant look, "that I should be the better person to bring our little stranger here to bear with our northern customs and climate; the young meet the young half way. Miss Lincoln already begins to think me something like a brother, though a great bear, don't you?"

Mariam had risen when his mother entered; she looked in his face, but could not speak, yet the gaze was all eloquent with gratitude.

"Now, dear mother," he continued, rising and drawing her to his seat; "come, take my place beside our young friend, and here, Leah, give me another chair."

He placed Mariam's hand in his mother's as he spoke, and then continued rattling on in the same strain, to endeavour by these means to do away with the first impression—the almost fear and repulsion he noticed on the girl's part towards Mrs. Adair; and he freely admitted to himself, knowing little as he did of their first meeting, that it was not without cause. If he hoped ever to remove that first cruel impression, he was mistaken—Mariam's character was of too stern a mould; and the whole of that scene on her arrival had confirmed this point in her natural disposition for ever; it was a seed sown whose root never would be eradicated. This same cause gave Richard a hold upon her mind which nothing could make her forget. Mariam was not an ordinary girl, and even were he to change, and become like the others, he would still be to her, the one who had first spoken kindness in this prison-house; the first who made a tear of gentle feeling flow.

CHAPTER VII.

LET us pass over the cold winter, and leap into the month of April, the bride of the year—for a bride it seems to us: so young, fair, and freshly clad, ignorant alike of summer's heat or winter's chill, a loving child still, the wide world before it, unknown, unlearned. Smiling one moment beneath the embrace of her loving spouse, glowing as the god of day, and then before the smile has passed, bursting into tears in memory of the home she has quitted, with the mother's farewell still ringing in her ears.

Mrs. Adair had just returned to town for the season from the Grange, and with her Angelina, Mariam, and the creature Angelina hated above all else in the world, Leah. Mariam she might annoy in various ways, wound, or oppress; but with this mere servant she was powerless! She *felt* Leah despised, understood, and, without the slightest ebullition of feeling, thwarted in every way; and her simplest tone, generally acting as a balsam to heal, in an instant, the wounds her venomous tongue inflicted on poor Mariam.

In vain Angelina had endeavoured to make her mother send the girl to school, for at least a year or two.

This she urged on finding the impossibility of sufficiently oppressing her at home.

But, though a very weak woman, Mrs. Adair was not a bad-hearted one, and moreover, Richard and Elton were there to judge her; and, in the face of truth and justice, she was compelled to admit that Mariam was far better educated, in many respects, though not a classical lady, than Angelina; *this* was the true cause of this latter's almost insane hatred of her. She was very young, certainly handsome, in her rigid, stern, Indian beauty, moulded in form as *only* Indian women are, well educated, and, a few flaws apart, a perfect creature. We have said in charity the best of her, let the reader detect the defects. A few touches by way of accomplishments, might have been added to her education; but in good, sterling, necessary knowledge, she had nothing to learn, having been placed early in the charge of an excellent English governess, under the immediate eye of a sensible mother.

The season promised to be a stormy one to Angelina; for, despite all her manœuvring to prevent it, Mariam was to be introduced; this was another clause in the extraordinary will her father had made. It really appeared as if the foolish man, though resolved to die at the stake of sentiment, had his misgivings about the prudence of his choice of guardian for his poor child, and dreaded some neglect or injustice.

One thing we have totally omitted to mention, but we imagine the reader's perspicacity will have gone hand in hand with facts, and guessed that the man who

sent Thibet shawls and diamonds, with a setting of three hundred pounds a year to the guardian, did not leave the ward penniless; no, Mariam was that most melancholy object—an heiress!

We are not speaking ironically; for, great blessing as money may be, what a curse it becomes when a young innocent heart is put in the opposite balance! How every thing about her becomes tinged with a sickly, bilious hue; and this colouring arises from the god all worship—gold. It is, indeed, like the plant Moore speaks of, which "tinges the teeth of the fawn;" for scarcely any thing, not even pure ivory, can escape the infecting stain. Mariam, to whom money had ever been as dross, soon learned this; for she heard little else but "with your fortune, you will make a splendid match; you can command any one, every thing!" until at last, the girl in sheer disgust, almost longed to be poor, only knowing the witch (a witch in truth), by name. And by degrees a cold thought became generated in her young heart—"I shall never be loved for myself!" And love, the aim of every heart, every existence, seemed as lost to her, as Heaven's glorious sky, in storm or peace, to the blind.

Yes, Mariam had forty thousand pounds in perspective the day she should marry, or come of age!

Poor Lieutenant Lincoln acted wisely in worldly-wisdom the day he exchanged into an Indian regiment, and thence into the civil service, where his breaking heart stood in nowise in the way of a rapidly acquired fortune, to which his marriage added a good portion.

* * * * * *

"So Mariam, my love, you are going to your first ball to-morrow night?" said Mrs. Wilton, as she and her niece—young aunt, young niece—sat quietly at work in a little snug room—all flowers and woman's pretty untidyness—in Russell Square. "Do you anticipate much pleasure?"

"No, dear aunt," answered Mariam, looking up from a something she had been very busy with in coloured silks; "do you know, I would much rather not go?"

"Much rather not go!" exclaimed her aunt in surprise, accentuating every word; "Why not? You must have some reason for so unnatural a wish at your age?"

"Oh! there has been so much said about it, so many discussions about my dress, et cetera, that I am quite weary already. I know that I shall not like it, besides —besides——"

"Well, what besides?"

"Oh! I shall know no one; and you will not be there; and with whom shall I dance?"

"Why, were *I* there," answered her aunt laughing, "you would scarcely dance with me! Of whom are you thinking?" and she fixéd her large brown eyes seriously on Mariam's face.

The girl did not blush, she seemed almost too stern, though so girlish, for girlish acts; but the eye fell, and its lash quivered. "I dislike dancing with strangers," she replied, after a pause.

"Mr. Adair will not then accompany his mother and

sister?" asked Mrs. Wilton, looking at her, but with seeming indifference, by the tone of voice.

"I presume not; he told me yesterday he hated balls, and was otherwise engaged."

"But surely, Mariam, all the pleasure of the evening does not depend upon the presence of Mr. Adair? I hope not." These last words were uttered in a tone of half fear, half prayer.

"No, aunt," answered the girl, looking up hastily and impetuously; "surely you do not think his absence could cause me pain? I only feel how much I dislike going out alone with the others and Mr. Elton; Richard turns many a shaft aside which else might wound me. I am *only* grateful to him;" and the proud lips pressed each other, perhaps to hide a gentler thought which had wellnigh escaped them.

"I hope so, dear child; for it would be a bitter trial to me the day I saw you loving Mr. Adair."

"I know you think ill of Richard," said she, again looking down.

"Dear Mariam, why call him Richard so familiarly?" cried Mrs. Wilton impatiently.

"He asked me to do so; besides, living as we do, like brother and sister, he calling me Mariam, how can I do otherwise?"

"Yet you call his sister Miss Adair."

"Oh! I never could call her Angelina," exclaimed the girl, looking up with startling energy; "she is too repulsive to me."

This reply seemed still less to please Mrs. Wilton; it

was a confirmation of her fear, that her niece liked young Adair too well to remove him by any estranging barrier from her regard, but she wisely changed the conversation by asking, "And what dress *do* you wear?"

"Only imagine, dear aunt," and she encircled the other's waist fondly, as if grateful that she had changed the current of her questionings, "Mrs. Adair wished me to wear that horrid thing, covered with stars; she said it looked rich. I should have been like a rambling sky!"

"You mean the gold lama," laughed Mrs. Wilton, caressing the long rich curls of raven black which rested on her bosom.

"Yes, that horrid lama which came with me. I hate rich things; people would be sure to ask who I was, and then I should hear the eternal phrase which drove me so frantic at the Grange—'She's an heiress!' Dear aunt, you cannot think how sick I was of it. Every body whispered it in my hearing, until I used to rush off by myself into the lonely woods, and rejoice at seeing the boughs, *still* black and leafless, however much I looked upon them; for the feeling had become one so painful to me, from ever hearing people say—'You can command any thing you please,' that I dreaded almost lest Nature herself should become servile, and burst into an unseasonable garb to please me!"

"My dearest Mariam," cried her aunt in almost terror, "you should check this cold, morbid feeling; it will

lead you into much sorrow," and she embraced her tenderly.

"Do you know," cried Mariam, starting up with energy, "that there are but three persons in the world I have confidence in?"

"And if you prove three pure and faithful at the termination of life's journey, you will be a happy woman, my Mariam; who are they? I am one, of course?" and she smiled, but it was forced, she dreaded the enumeration, as she drew the girl again beside her.

"Oh, you—yes—you! and then Leah, and," she hesitated a moment, "Richard Adair," she continued unfalteringly; "why should I deny it? for he was my first friend, when I was friendless, among those cold hearts. And now he never bends to me, as others do; he is harsh often. I don't think he likes me, and he certainly does not hesitate in showing it."

"Beware, Mariam, there may be quite as much depth in this seeming coldness, as in servility or attention."

"Dear aunt!" almost shrieked the girl, "do not take this one drop of comforting hope from me in the bitter draughts of my everyday existence—I do not love Richard Adair, but I esteem him—don't take *that* from me."

"I am perhaps wrong in opening life's darker pages to your young eye, Mariam, but I dread for you. I *know*—do not ask me how—but I know Richard Adair to be a *roué*, a gambler, a man of no fixed principle of good, and loving you, as I do, judge what my fears are?"

"You have been deceived, I am sure you have,"

whispered the girl with trembling lips. "I know he has faults, but whose fault is that?—his mother's. I have heard him regret so bitterly that his father died so soon, leaving him without a counsellor or guide."

"Let us drop the subject, dear," said Mrs. Wilton, sadly. "I have done my duty in warning you; I can but trust now to your own good sense to guide you."

"Oh, would I were poor!" cried Mariam, bursting into tears, and tears to her were as weeping to a man—they seared, not healed.

"Riches are blessings, well employed, my dear child."

"Oh no!" sobbed Mariam. "Curses, aunt—curses! they turn all to ashes; smiles become grimaces, sympathy and affection, base worldly things, selling themselves in life's bazaar!—a Jew's bargain to a Gentile fool! Heaven keep me from such purchase!"

"Mariam, Mariam!" cried her aunt, terrified at her violence, as she encircled her in her arms, "be yourself, be calm—promise me you will think more reasonably, and I trust justly, of mankind, or your life will be indeed a burden to you."

"And you who now say this, bade me even suspect him who has ever been a friend to me, though only in pity."

And she fixed her now tearless, but burning, eyes on the other.

"I would not—Heaven knows, Mariam—circumscribe your heart's warm affections: I would enlarge, but well direct them."

"Then let me *prove* Richard Adair unworthy before

you condemn—do not fear me; but he is my *first* remembrance not mixed with pain, in this cold land, to me—for I did not know you then—and do not bid me turn from the hand which first took mine, until I prove it base. Why deny human nature, in my person, the privilege awarded to the brute—instinct, by which to know our friends and enemies?"

"Because Heaven has given man sense and reason to raise him above the mere animal; these are more than instinct."

"I like my half-savage instinct better than all reasoning power!" cried Mariam, impetuously. "It has taught me to be grateful to, and to trust Richard Adair, as much as I fear and hate his sister!"

The poor girl was all emotion; her voice trembled, her hands were clasped. Mrs. Wilton feared lest, in seeking to avert an evil, she might not have raised an ungovernable demon, named "obstinacy," which leads many a one head-foremost to destruction. She did not well know her niece yet; so, gently as possible, she soothed the ruffled spirit of the child in years—but woman, strong woman at heart—and they parted, as the two ever did, with mutual regret, and Mariam returned to her unloved, uncongenial home.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIAM LINCOLN was as a cloud, now, in a summer's evening sky. The hour is twilight, the heavens calm, and the cloud sails on almost imperceptibly, a gentle voluptuous movement, floating onward in its flowing robes of fleecy white. The sky is changed, the moon has risen, troubled, and anxiously watching the flying forms around her—on comes the white-robed, calm cloud of an hour before; it too is ruffled, flying—whither? it knows not, but on, on it goes in untranquil haste. Surely it will respect the Queen of Night, and pause in its career!—No, onward it comes, unhesitating, hasty, but still dignified; it passes as a veil before the moon, and the world is in darkness.

Thus, indeed, she was all impulse and impetuosity; she looked upon every thing as predestined, as a fate. She had enough of the Indian maid about her to have cast a magic lamp at eve on any stream, and have wept in bleak despair if it faded or sunk. She sailed along the majestic, fleecy cloud, calm in peace; flying, hurrying, overwhelming all in her excitement—because, such was her fate! Such had nature's Great Master made her, and bade her be! All was predestined, therefore self-control would be but a vain task.

The Mariam of Mrs. Wilton's boudoir, and the Mariam who from thence entered Mrs. Adair's, were two different persons. Now she was cold and calm, prepared to bear all which might be inflicted, as Heaven might will it; but she was generally too much disgusted with the petty means tried to annoy her to be more than cold and impassive; moreover, being prepared for all, little surprised her.

Of course she had been presented at court, and "Miss Lincoln, by Mrs. Adair," had shone in the *Post*, with a full account of the splendid dress, and glittering jewels of the heiress. On that day, despite all Angelina's efforts to flurry and alarm her, she was the cloud of our metaphor sailing along, careless and indifferent! For weeks before she had had a special professor of deportment, to drill her into propriety of step, manner, and train-bearing over the arm, before entering the presence. In vain Angelina and Miss Caffir sat rigidly by to put her out of countenance. Mr. Blank, though seeing little to correct in this calm, dignified nature, of course found an arm too angular, a step too hurrying, a shoulder stooping! Mariam listened to all, but amended nothing, not from conceit—she had none—but pure listless indifference, and voluptuous dislike to trouble. Angelina was bitter, Mr. Blank suggestive, Miss Caffir tittering; Mariam's thoughts were away from all, therefore when all had been done, she walked the same as ever—gliding and noiselessly—the head sat as freely as ever on the shoulders, and the train fell in natural grace from the rounded arm! It was a case for

despair! Nothing could make her awkward in look or action. Angelina ground her teeth, reserving, however, a hope for the day of presentation. Mariam, without conceit, had, however, one vulnerable point—her Achilles' heel was her complexion. In her Indian home she had learned the distaste Europeans have to black blood; here it had been doubly impressed on her mind. Black blood is negro blood; she knew hers was not this, but she was painfully alive to a suspicion of it. Angelina guessed this, and full often the girl's quivering lip compressed, to hide her suffering at some sarcasm, scarcely veiled enough for common politeness. Men, too, have an odd way of speaking of girls; if one have black eyes and hair, even though the skin be Parian marble, they term her "a little black girl;" but, fortunately, all tastes are not alike, some admire "little black girls," others prefer "albinos," others the "betwixt and between." We again distinctly repeat, that Mariam's susceptibility exaggerated her tint; she was of a clear Biscayan complexion, no more. Thus the day of presentation arrived, and as Mariam glided through the long corridor at St. James's, her train over her arm, a buzz assailed her ears.

"Who is she?" asked one.

"Some Indian princess," suggested another.

"No, for there is no suite."

"By heavens!" exclaimed a third, "what a beautiful Oriental face!"

No one could term Mariam "pretty," "handsome,"

or "beautiful," or "hideous," according to taste, but she must excite an extreme, a superlative.

All these she heard; so did Angelina, who marched before her, with a bitter heart of envy.

They quitted the corridor, and found themselves in the crush, where all seem rushing on, until you expect to see one huge mass roll pell-mell—stars, garters, diamonds, and feathers—to her Majesty's feet. And here, in this crush, was poor Mariam's heart stricken down. First came the—"Who's that?" followed by—"What a little black girl!"

"But she has deucedly fine features."

"And feathers and diamonds," answered a crabbed old dowager, as she fanned the shrivelled cheeks heated by layers of rouge and white lead!

"Is it Queen Pomare?" whispered an albino young lady.

"Doubtful," answered a wag (overhearing the remark), in a friend's ear; "she is too much caparisoned for that; her Pomarian majesty's full dress, they say, consists of a coral necklace!"

Mariam heard every word, and it needed not Angelina's triumphant look, as she turned round towards her, to add to her bitterness. Poor girl! she was too much galled to weep, but she groaned in spirit, and thought of those in their graves whom she had loved so well, and she almost hated them, for—under Heaven's will—creating her.

Some one pushed forward in the crowd—she felt

a hand on her arm and looked up—her eyes were dilated with her heart's pangs.

"This crush fatigues and alarms you," said a kind voice. "Lean on me—'tis ever an ill-arranged affair. I often wonder why some better means are not adopted."

It was Elton, a man whom she had hitherto rather disliked and avoided.

"Thank you," she uttered, in a low, nervous tone. "I wish I were out of it. Mrs. Adair bade me keep close, and here 'tis most difficult."

"A stupid affair altogether!" he answered. "What possible benefit can it be to you to be dragged up to her Majesty's feet, and then pushed away again? But I suppose fashion must have its laws obeyed."

"I would I were dead! I would I were dead!" muttered the impatient spirit of this fettered humanity. "Nothing but sorrow, suffering, and death at last!"

"What do you say?" asked Elton, kindly. She did not reply.

"You wished yourself dead, I think?—Don't wish that if you *really* desire it, for your prayer will not be granted; Heaven seldom listens to us in our impatience. Come, here we are; now I must deliver you to your chaperon, but I shall watch for your *sortie*. I am glad I have been of service to you, though in so little."

"Thank you—thank you, Mr. Elton," she replied, and a faint smile flitted over that young rigid face, she felt so grateful to any one for *daring* to shew attention

to the "little black girl." Poor Mariam knew not the value of fashionable phraseology, and men of the world's slang. On her return, the "Who is she?" had been answered somewhere, and she seemed to move onward, the *tableau vivant* of one universal whisper—

"She's an heiress."

There may be some in the world as desolate and lonely at heart, as poor Mariam; if so, they will perfectly comprehend, and feel acutely for this Oriental plant, on our cold shores.

Some are blessed from infancy with dear companionship; they grow up a cluster of buds, bloom into rich flowers, and, when their leaves fall, their "mates of the garden" are watching around them, breathing fresh incense over their dying hour, to make it pass, as a sweet dream. Happy these! Some are torn early apart from their fellows; what, if they be placed in a rich vase, can all its beauty make their solitude gay? or give them the kindred stem on which they grew to life? Like this was Mariam; she had been the idol of both parents, surrounded, too, by loving friends. Her mother died—it was a severe blow to her young heart—but she was *so* young that a father's affection, which all then devolved upon herself, soothed and reconciled her. Death came again! and this time it was mother, father, friends all—for, by the will of a lunatic, her father tore her from all. Instead of leaving her to the care of some valued friend in India,

he rooted up this flower from its rich native soil, and sent it to wither in our cold clime, and oh! worse than all, in bitter solitude, though of this he was ignorant, or indifferent, in the anxiety to carry out his sentimental purpose.

It is a sad truth, that when death lays his cold hand upon us, we too often become apathetic, even with respect to our dearest, fondest hopes. Few cherish these warmly when the eye sees the gate of eternity before it. We know that that once passed, it closes on our earthly career, and we become selfish even for our best beloved, and often we leave them to battle with ills, which one moment's energy might have spared them. This energy we should have found, had our physician said, "Exert yourself, and you can command life!" Oh! then, the garb of apathy would have been cast aside, and the dying man, with renewed vigour, have risen to battle again for existence. Oh! we are a mass—a huge ugly mass—of selfishness, and how we deceive ourselves! Old age is doubly selfish. Is it that generosity is but the gossamer down on the butterfly of early morning? brush it off, and only the ugly naked worm remains beneath!

Captain Lincoln had had many doubts, even whilst making his will; but the climate made him older than his years, and then the apathy of certain death crept over him, and he argued, "The girl is rich, she must make friends in England; I have done my duty to her, so let it be;" and he closed his eyes in peace, not once thinking of the misery those friends bring to a feeling heart, who only come because we are rich. In the midst of all,

Mariam was in utter solitude. That solitude which often made her utter her thoughts aloud, that the aching heart might breathe a sympathetic answer to her deep wretchedness. To whom could she speak of her annoyances at the drawing-room? Her delicacy towards one she loved, even though her dependant, forbade her uttering them to the poor black Leah; besides, Leah, though all love for her, could not comprehend half the sufferings of her finer mind. If she spoke of it to Mrs. Wilton, much as she loved her, she feared lest it might be attributed to wounded vanity, and vanity she despised; no one could comprehend the force of that galling term on her soul, in the simple phrase—"that black girl."

There was one who, without ever having evinced much kindness towards her, sincerely pitied her; this was Elton. He had been for months watching this girl, resolved not to spoil her by over attention, not to soothe too much, lest a proud spirit should rebel too violently against oppression; but he watched, judged her correctly, resolving to be a prop when she most should need one, and, if possible, guide her safely over the rugged path her too susceptible nature would plough into deep furrows for her own footsteps. It was this thought which led him to her Majesty's palace of St. James's, the day Mariam was dragged thither to do homage to her queen.

To Angelina's great annoyance—for she even had a sort of fear of Elton's sarcasms—he was watching for their exit, and, after handing them into their carriage,

composedly took the fourth place himself, thus sparing Mariam many cutting remarks, and gave her time to recover before reaching Eaton Square; once there, he knew she would have Leah, who stood like a *cheval de frize* between her and Angelina.

CHAPTER IX.

We have seen that Mariam said nothing of her bitter annoyance at the drawing-room to her aunt; she passed it over as an event Mrs. Adair deemed necessary, a sort of licence taken out by the unmarried ladies of the *beau monde*, to shoot Cupid's arrows at every eligible man—which reads, every elder son and *millionnaire*—only it looks better to clothe it in a mantle of royal-blue, a loyal homage. It would not appear so well to hang out a flag of distress, a sort of union-jack!

Mariam spoke to no one of her bitterness, so the "little black girl" nestled the closer within her soul, her soul's secret.

Could persons only foresee how many a word lightly spoken embitters years of a fellow-creature's existence, perhaps colouring some page of crime, from very recklessness, full many an idle word would be left unsaid. There is not on earth a more sorrowful possession to the possessor than too much susceptibility.

When Mariam returned from Mrs. Wilton's, after the conversation we have detailed a few pages back, she found the great question of her dress for the coming ball had been decided by Angelina; and Leah's first act, when she entered her room, was to show her, extended

on her bed, a dress of pea-green, rich-watered silk! Had all the envious hearts in the world been set to work to invent a hideous costume for Mariam, they could not have chosen better. A heavy silk for so young a girl's first ball—and pea-green! Mariam was no saint to bear all patiently; she was only a mere mortal girl, and after very quietly looking at it, said—

"Leah, put that thing away; I shall not wear it."

"Missy Adair sent him, with him love," grinned the attendant, in her peculiar phraseology.

"Then take it back, Leah, with my best thanks, and say, I cannot wear green."

The corners of her mouth twitched in a manner betokening how near her eyes the tears were, for before them she saw the unfading scroll, "that black girl."

"Come here, him come here!" exclaimed Leah, drawing her by the arm to a large wardrobe, her face expanded by a wide grin of delight; "look!" she continued, pulling open the doors, "him be beautiful in dat!"

And, spread out before her eyes, she beheld a dress, the one of all others she would herself have chosen—white, the purest tarlatane, with a band and long ends of black; it was simple, and perfectly in keeping with her age and position; for she had, with difficulty, half acceded to the wish of Mrs. Adair, that at this ball she should take leave of her mourning, which she had hitherto worn. This was another of Angelina's covert ways of grieving her, to which she urged her mother,

in seeming kindness to the "poor girl, who looks so melancholy in her mourning; it must constantly remind her of her loss!" She well knew that respect to the dead is our greatest comfort, and hallows our sorrow!

Leah's act was a reproach to Mariam for her apathy, in giving up a point she should have clung to; she felt it as such, and far more, she felt the delicacy and affection of the woman who had, unknown to all, accomplished her dearest wishes; she could not speak, but, turning to that really black neck, she threw her arms around it and sobbed, though not a tear came; her heart was bursting with self-reproaches, for accusing Heaven of her loneliness, when she possessed so true a friend.

"Him not cry—him not cry!" sobbed Leah herself, hugging her to her bosom. "Poor dear Massa Lincum" (as she called it), "not dead one year, and them make she put on colours and flowers! not while Leah there to pull 'em off again! Him not cry! Leah put by the green thing, and then Missy Adair run mad when 'im see de white gound! Not say nuffin now; hold him tongue—him dumb!"

This was one of Leah's methods of defeating Angelina's plots to annoy, and yet so quietly done that nothing could be said against it.

If we would only keep a ledger of "debtor and creditor," and balance this from time to time, we should more than ever feel the justice and love of Heaven, whose balance is so beautifully poised, that our annoyances would seldom or never, unless by some error or

impatience on our own part, exceed our triumphs and joys; and had we not the former to remind us of our dependence on a higher power, of the mere poverty of our unassisted humanity, what vain, egotistical, selfish, and worthless creatures we should be, especially if *all* prospered with us, and only praise sounded in our ears! The most unpleasant things in the world from home, sweet home, are home truths; but what an infinity of good they do us! How they teach us our proper level in this pilgrimage over shifting sand, which offers no stable footing.

This preface is to prepare the reader for the fact, that when the evening of Mariam's first ball arrived, which was at the house of Mrs. Bruce, before mentioned in these pages, nothing but triumphs seemed to await her footsteps. Leah's thoughtfulness about the half mourning dress, as we before observed, was a reproach to her for her own apathy, in having, even for peace' sake, consented to throw off her tribute to a father's memory; for, without offending any one, she might have firmly refused to go out otherwise dressed. To the palace 'twas different—there she put on a costume of ceremony; but at times she had all a Creole's apathetic nature. It will be observed by our readers, that even Angelina had been forced to acknowledge her as a woman, not a child to treat with tyranny; the weapons she was obliged to arm herself with against Mariam were those of sarcasm and envy, under the guise of good-nature.

It was with a dark scowl crossing her livid brow, that

Angelina received Mariam's quiet thanks for the odious green dress, with the remark—

"But I think it too womanish for me."

"You do not consider yourself a child when it requires a will of your own to be ungrateful and unladylike," sneered the other, glaring on her with her green eyes.

"I am not conscious how I am ungrateful, Miss Adair," was the tranquil reply.

"After my troubling myself to have that dress made to please and surprise you!"

"I am indeed a merely cold girl of the world in offering my thanks," said Mariam, fixing her full glance on the other's face; "whereas, we should be ardent, generous children in our heartfelt expressions to those who are so anxious about us. Pray, let your kind intentions towards me be their best reward, I am so poor in language."

Angelina felt every word was sarcastically meant, though so gently spoken.

How we hate to see our ugly thoughts and deeds reflected in another's glass!

"What dress *are* you going to wear?" asked Mrs. Adair, who entered during the discussion.

"Something absurd, depend upon it, madam," said Angelina, "unless you superintend it; perhaps Miss Lincoln may submit to *your* counsels."

"Let me keep my secret, dear Mrs. Adair?" asked Mariam smiling; "I am sure you will like my dress!"

"*I* shall assuredly not go if it be any thing extraor-

dinary," said Angelina, haughtily. "Possibly Miss Lincoln intends favouring us with some native costume, one she may feel more at ease in, than when in our, perhaps civilized, but less *attracting*, dresses!"

Mariam felt the bolt, but smiled over the wound; she was learning self-control, and that difficult lesson, internal, but unshown suffering.

"Now, the Bayadere's is an advantageous dress to those who like exhibiting themselves; whatever you choose, I trust you will, as I before stated, feel more at ease in it than you were at St. James's. I never felt so embarrassed in my life as at all the observations and ill-concealed mirth around us."

"I thought," answered Mariam, looking sternly in Angelina's face, "that Miss Adair told me no girl could call herself fitted for society until after her reception at court? If, then, court be the place you represent it, one of loudly rude observations and vulgar mirth, I grieve indeed, for my dear father's sake, that his child should have made a début into society under such bad auspices! And, for the future, I will learn to blush for myself, to save my friends their painful embarrassment on my account." And, rising, she quitted the room, with her proud, languid step. It took much to rouse her energy; but once it struggled to life, it was as a giant. She ascended the stairs calmly, she even spoke to some one, yet she scarcely remembered whom, as she did so; but once in her room, the door closed, and only Leah there, all her Oriental fire burst forth, the passion, which no one had ever curbed, for even her mother, with excellent

common sense, had a nature to subdue, which, unchecked in herself, lived anew in her child. This was Mariam's worst defect—ungovernable rage, rage which for the moment could kill; and the girl, all patience beneath the galling wounds inflicted upon her before her tormentors, now tore off the ligatures which bound those wounds, and stood almost in frenzy, as the mad blood streamed forth—there, more than in any thing else, she was the Oriental woman of twenty, not the English girl of sixteen.

"Leah!" she cried in a suffocating tone, "Leah, give me air—air, girl! Don't you see I am choking, —Leah! water—girl, water!" and like a maniac the quick step strode through the room, the small hand grasped the masses of thick curls, and compressed them in one knot behind the head, as though they pressed on her brain. Leah knew her well; she did not utter a word, but silently opened the window, and placed herself before it, lest the madness of a moment might tempt the ungoverned spirit to suicide. For some minutes, which were as hours, she paced that room in utter silence but for the deep sighs which burst from her breast. At last Leah approached, and gently encircling her with one arm, placed a glass of water to her lip. Mariam stopped, and shuddered like one awakened ddenly from somnambulism.

"Drink, missy," whispered the girl.

Mariam's eyes were haggard, and glazed almost to ndness.

"Drink, missy, dear," whispered Leah again, draw-

ing her gently towards her, at the same time dropping on a seat. "Him wery bad—him worried—come to poor black girl's heart—she lub him well!"

The spell was broken. A storm of tears fell over Leah's neck as Mariam nestled there. It was, indeed, as a storm—for it came, and was gone. And the girl, dropping on her knees, raised her trembling hands to Heaven, and prayed so earnestly for patience to bear, and pardon for her great fault.

"It is so ugly a sin!" she uttered, in contrition and humility. "Oh, good Heaven, teach me to overcome myself, and then none may have power so to afflict me! Heaven help me!—Heaven help me!"

And now, when Leah clasped her to her bosom, her tears were gentle and soft as summer rain in sunshine.

* * * * *

When the evening of the ball arrived, and Mariam descended to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Adair and Angelina were both already awaiting her, who, in the calm, gliding figure, might know the girl of intense passion whom we have just portrayed? Assuredly, we have two natures given us—an evil to conquer, or be conquered by—a good one to crown our efforts, if we fight a brave fight.

Mrs. Adair insisted upon knowing what dress Mariam would wear; and though she at first opposed the half-mourning, Richard was present, who upheld Mariam's wish as just and natural, and now she stood before the enraged Angelina so simply dressed, and beautiful in her natural grace, that the choking throat had not

power to obey the heart's desire, and fling forth its malignant disappointment.

"If Miss Lincoln be quite ready," she uttered at last, hastily rising, "we should do well to go, madam!"

"I hope I have not detained you," said Mariam quietly. "Eleven was the hour you named; it is not more than half-past ten."

"How I detest the bad taste of scrupulous exactness in dates and hours!" muttered Angelina to her mother, in an audible whisper. "It is so perfectly *parvenu*." And the amiable lady sailed out of the room after her mother.

Mariam looked beautiful as she entered Mrs. Bruce's rooms, already crowded, her rich, glossy curls, nearly touching the slender waist—the olive cheek even was tinted—the European blood had gained the ascendant—the rigidity of the face had relaxed—and a smile lit up the whole, for she met Richard at the door, and he had composedly drawn her arm under his own, with a—"How nice you look; I thought they were going to make a green parrot of you—a pretty poll from Timbuctoo, with red feathers on your head!"

"And one sentence in my vocabulary, 'How d'ye do?'"—and she smiled. "And by the way, Richard, How *do* you do?—for one seldom sees you."

"I have been much engaged lately," he replied, and a shade and a blush flitted over his cheek as if pursuing one another, the latter a spirit evoked by a regret the former betokened. "I should like to dance the first dance with you if I might, and were I not engaged,"

he quickly added. "But the truth is, Marie (he used his pet abbreviation), "there is a little girl here who feels out of her place, my late tutor's daughter, and I have asked her to dance, to put her a little at ease."

"That's very kind of you, and quite right," she replied, smiling. "Will you introduce her to me? Poor girl! I pity her if she feels lonely."

"You're a good little soul," he replied, looking in the glowing face raised to his; "but——"

"But what?" And she smiled playfully.

"Oh, nothing. I was thinking of something else. Perhaps so, if I have an opportunity, that is——"

He was evidently confused. Mariam saw it, and was silent.

By this time they were in a crowd, out of which rose from time to time, as they passed on, the sentences, "What a beautiful girl!" "What a glorious brunette!" "Who is she?" "She must be Spanish!" And not one uttered, "That black girl."

This was Heaven's just balance, to soothe an afflicted, too susceptible child.

Mariam was radiant, because Richard Adair heard all; for she knew Angelina had reported to him the palace phrases.

How very vain we grow when there is some one to prize our beauty, whom we should like to look and laugh upon, like stars, or night flowers with bright and holy lustre!

CHAPTER X.

"WHO's that Richard is dancing with?" asked Mrs. Adair of the ball-giver, Mrs. Bruce, raising her *lorgnon* (she was really short-sighted), as these two ladies sat side by side.

"Oh! only Miss Bateman; don't you remember your son's tutor's daughter? My husband (you know he's always doing something very disagreeable) must needs invite her this evening, because, he says, she is so pretty and unobtrusive."

"I dislike your unobtrusive girls; there's always cunning in them. It is so natural for a girl to like showing herself, that those who affect the contrary *must* be deceitful!" was the charitable reply.

"But Bruce never sees, or does things like any one else; and, because he says this Mr. Bateman has advanced our Charles so much in his studies, he must needs ask them here to-night. If the girl were not so pretty, they might pass unnoticed; but I certainly should not like it said that my son's tutor and his daughter had been my invited guests. It looks like going into the highways to fill your rooms! Such people are very well in their places!"

"Quite right, my dear, and I certainly don't think

Richard had any occasion to ask her to dance. Men are really so very stupid—they have not the tact of women! Merely because I allowed her father to take her for a year to the Grange with Richard and himself, the boy thinks he must keep up the acquaintance. He should have cut her long ago!"

"Cut whom?" asked Elton, coming up, with his usual blunt inquisitiveness.

"Oh, nobody!" answered Mrs. Adair, colouring.

"Not me, I hope?" he persisted. "A strong cord unites us, my dear Mrs. Adair, despite our little differences sometimes; you must have a sharp knife to sever it." And he dropped into a vacant chair.

The two ladies exchanged glances of annoyance.

"I always like to find you two out," he continued, with bland good-humour; "one hears so many useful and worth-preserving remarks, not like the general run of ladies' conversation; but, whom are you wishing to cut off your list?"

"Oh, nobody!" answered Mrs. Adair, peevishly; "she is not, thank goodness, upon it!"

"Is it not very ridiculous of Mr. Adair opening the ball with Miss Bateman?" asked Mrs. Bruce, deprecatingly.

"Has he done so?—Where?" and Elton looked towards the couple, smiling pleasantly on one another in a quadrille.

"Oh, now I understand! He ought to cut the acquaintance of his playfellow of a whole year of seclusion at the Grange."

"She only accompanied her father, my son's tutor," said Mrs. Adair, haughtily.

"True, but you desired it—to refine his mind, you said. If she were capable of doing so as a child, I should think she might make a doubly beneficial impression on the man."

"Perhaps that is her aim!" suggested Mrs. Bruce, with a significant nod towards the criminal, Kate Bateman, all smiles, and yet so innocently glad.

"You're a funny woman," said Elton, bluntly, to Mrs. Adair. "You made a complete game of cup-and-ball of these two; you attach them to one another like the toy I speak of, and then, when you have flung him in the air, you are quite surprised to see the silken cord draw them together again."

"How d'ye do, Elton," cried a jovial-looking man, coming up. "I say, do you see poor Bateman's daughter, how happy she looks? By Jove, I'm so glad I asked her! Poor girl! I daresay she don't go out much;" and the offending and disagreeable Mr. Bruce rubbed his hands.

"I think her sadly out of her place!" said Mrs. Adair, coldly.

"Bless my soul! Why?"

"Why? because she's only the daughter of your son's tutor!"

"Quite right and just!" replied Elton, with mock seriousness, before the other could reply. "For, assuredly, the man who devotes himself to make a gentleman of youths, who would otherwise be uncouth

cubs, *cannot*, either he, or his daughter, be fit society for the parents and friends of those very youths!"

The ladies looked thunderbolts at Elton.

"Capital! excellent!" laughed Bruce. "Come along, Elton, let's go and look round." And the congenial friends walked off arm-in-arm.

"I declare my husband is a perfect ruffian!" gasped Mrs. Bruce.

"And Elton a bear!" was the reply.

"Between ourselves, Bruce," whispered Elton, I think your wife and Mrs. Adair the two most prejudiced, narrow-minded women I know!"

"My dear fellow, two such women's tongues are enough to breed a plague from their pestilential words!"

"I thank Heaven I'm a bachelor; my dear Bruce, I pity you from my soul."

"Thank you, my dear fellow, indeed you may!"

* * * * *

"Richard, how absent you are!" said Kate, looking in his face, and trying to catch the eyes which were wandering every where. "Are you seeking any one?"

"Who, I, Kate? No, no one; that is, I was wondering who my sister was talking so seriously to, on that sofa."

"Don't you know that is the young clergyman of St. ——, Mr. Narcissus Browne; he is a great pet with the ladies."

"Not for his beauty, I presume."

"He's considered very interesting; but I do declare, Richard, you are seeking some one, for you are still searching through the rooms."

"Folly, Kate! jealousy," he whispered, and the soft dark eyes bent down upon her, beneath their long lashes.

"I don't think I ever saw Miss Lincoln look so handsome as to-night," said Kate, after a figure gone through.

"Where do you see her?" he asked hastily, and the eyes lit up.

"There," answered the girl, looking in his face half averted from her, with a pained look, "to the left; but then, 'tis true, I only have seen her in her walking-dress until this evening; she's very handsome, her eastern complexion gives so much richness to her beauty;" and she stifled a sigh. Richard looked silently at Mariam some moments; she was dancing with a very gentlemanly looking young man, with whom she was conversing with evident satisfaction.

"I disagree with you," said Richard, after a long survey; "I think I never saw Miss Lincoln looking worse in my life, and her dress is the last she should have put on, with her olive skin."

"I thought her dress simple and pretty."

"Well, perhaps, I'm no judge," he hastily replied, and then added sarcastically,—"Possibly, too, you admire the manner she is conducting herself? One knows no one; I thought her a most retiring girl, and she is positively flirting and free to an unpleasant extent."

Kate made no reply, but she sighed as she looked down. Women are rarely deceived, when the heart watches one they fear.

Richard was almost silent the remainder of the quadrille.

A change had come over the spirit of Angelina's dream. Somehow she had not failed to notice, that few men *voluntarily* invited her to dance. Her self-love solved the enigma; she was so superior in intellect and education to most, that they were envious of her! Now, though she lived much among the dead and the grandeur of their languages, she had not the slightest objection to a living lover, and his small talk. Before Mariam came, some few invited her to dance, from the policy which makes a man look forward to invitations to nice houses, but even she saw it was mere obligation on their part,—not one ever asked her a second time; and when she was positively engaged, and her partner standing beside her, drawing on his gloves like a lamb decking itself with garlands for some holocaust, half a dozen were sure to rush up and invite her! These are startling facts, which force us to open our eyes. For her, there were no snug little corners sought for a quiet *chat*—no breathing a breath of sweet air under a damask curtain at an open window, the moon beaming down on a happy face as it looks upon you! No; her partners walked through the dance, gave her an ice which their manner might have created without Gunter's intervention, and then they trotted her to her mother's wing! So thus the change came over the spirit of her dream, and she resolved to eschew dancing; for, from Mariam's success this evening, she too well saw, with bitterness of spirit, that the men—wretches that they

are!—would transfer their invitations to this girl, and deem the compliment (a pleasure) paid to one in the family, quite enough.

There is a body of men in the rear of Life's Army, men of peace, seeking their glory above this earth, and these men, by a strange misnomer, are called "militant," and these peaceful bodies are the forlorn hope of most ladies who fail in this world in creating a *grande passion*, or any *passion* at all; and these they fall back upon for consolation, and not always of a spiritual kind: there are the loaves and fishes of married life, the crusts are to be shared together in perspective. Clergymen must naturally possess more of the cardinal virtues than other men, and in charity bestow in alms, on those craving their regard, some kindness in return! Angelina had girded herself for the fight, with many another young and ancient lady, for the affections of Narcissus Browne; and he (was it to make them more eager for the fray?) had given out positively that he never intended marrying—that he thought a young man should first make himself a perfect master in theology before dreaming of such an event—and who could study with a wife and a dozen children? Besides, this "notice to the public" gave him much more freedom in his intercourse with families than if he had been looked upon as a marrying man. What his private intentions might be—what he might be ultimately tempted to do—and what all the young ladies intended he *should* do—are things at present hidden from our view.

Beside him Angelina sat, talking as she alone could

talk, and Narcissus listened, or seemed to do so, attentively; but a quiet observer might have noticed that his eyes stole furtive glances round that gay room—at whom? he alone knew if at one, or all.

* * * * *

"Dearest Kate," whispered Adair, tenderly pressing the hand which rested on his arm as they stood in one of those quiet corridor corners, only found in houses thrown open for a ball, and through which other couples quickly pass with furtive glances, a kind of *esprit de corps* custom, not to be inquisitive, lest they themselves should some day need the like charity.

"Dearest Kate, indeed you are wrong. I sincerely pity Mariam Lincoln. I love her as a dear sister—she is amiable, and little appreciated; but love her—no, decidedly not. In the first place, my fortune is insufficiently large to permit me, in delicacy, to seek an heiress. I'm a deucedly proud fellow, and then——"

"But," she interrupted, "you seemed so much annoyed at her dancing so often with Sir Philip Montgomery; was that not the name we heard her partner called?"

"Yes, I've heard of him often, but we never met before. He has been abroad. But as to my being annoyed, you are quite mistaken; except, because I thought her manner too free, and as my mother's ward——"

"True; but she appears very retiring to me."

"Girls are no judges," he hastily answered. "But let us leave her to her pleasures—confound the girl—and think of ourselves. I'm always happy with you beside me; that you well know."

"I've thought so, Richard; but it makes me sad. Where can it terminate? Your mother never would—"

"Leave care alone!" he quickly interrupted, and a half-frown crossed his brow, "and let us enjoy the present; 'tis my maxim. It was very kind of old Bruce to think of inviting you here."

"He is very good-natured, more especially since my poor father's sight has become so affected as to render his duties almost impossible towards young Mr. Bruce." A rapid sigh struggled upwards, quivering her lips.

"Don't sigh, Katty dear, or *I* shall be jealous."

"*You*, Richard, you would have little cause. I was thinking if my poor father should lose his sight."

"Away with such gloomy thoughts! The oculist he visited did not seem to anticipate any thing so dreadful, did he?"

"He said little, but looked very grave."

"Here you both are!" exclaimed Mr. Bruce, coming up, followed by a gentleman.

"I've brought you a partner, my dear," (to Kate.) "I told him he should dance with the prettiest girl in my house to night."

As he spoke, he turned round towards his companion, Sir Philip Montgomery. Kate coloured painfully, and looked up in Adair's face. The look asked—"Am I not engaged to you?" But his eye did not meet hers—it was fixed upon Sir Philip, and something very like satisfaction crossed his brow.

The introduction took place, and Kate, most

unwillingly, quitted Adair's arm for that of another, and Bruce and Adair walked off arm-in-arm.

"I knew you'd be glad to get away," said Bruce, good-naturedly; "for though she's a sweet, pretty girl—yet you know, after all, brought up together, as one may say—she is more like a sister to you than any thing else."

"Quite true," answered his companion, absently. He was thinking: "I wonder where Mariam is?"

Mariam was quietly seated on a sofa with Elton, who was just saying, "I know you fear and dislike me; —you think me horribly sarcastic and ill-natured, don't you?"

"I cannot understand you, that's all."

"Try and do so. I'm a very candid body, but not a bad one, I hope. I endeavour to lead or advise those worth interesting one's self about. I like you, though you have several faults."

"Thank you, Mr. Elton," and she laughed.

"I never flatter. You are passionate, and a little self-willed."

"You have never seen me in a passion?"

"Never, but I have seen the unmistakeable traces—the quivering lip, eye fearful of looking up, lest its glance should destroy—humanized lightning in it. And then the sudden quitting of a room, the return with haggard looks, and paled cheeks and lips."

"You have watched me narrowly, it would seem, Mr. Elton." And she looked fixedly at him.

"Now, don't run away with the ridiculous idea, that I am in love with you."

She coloured painfully.

"I see the *fear* was in your mind. Now, listen to me—there—don't turn down your eyes, like putting an extinguisher on a waxlight. I am not going to make a confession to you, beginning with a sigh, and 'I *once* loved!' For that *once*, never, thank Heaven, existed for me! Had it, I make no doubt it would have terminated with me as with almost all the rest of mankind, in becoming that morbid, sheepy thing, gregarious in its nature, where the love of one woman, instead of dying an unit, as it should do, begets and crowds, huddles, pens up fifty more into the space of a man's life, at the end of which he probably finds that he was equally in love with all, and never having been able to choose one, dies a disagreeable, crabbed bachelor!—or, out of the fifty, overlooked forty-nine gems, to select a piece of coloured glass! Fate has wonderfully preserved me from either rock. I never loved any woman ten minutes in my life!"

"Oh, I can believe you, Mr. Elton; you despise the sex!"

"Wrong—decidedly wrong! I look upon man as the noblest creation of heaven, *when* an upright, honest-hearted fellow,—woman, as the most finely wrought, chaste and beautiful, *when* not merely woman in name; she is the exquisite setting round a diamond, man the gem, which requires a deuced deal of polishing

to make any thing of it, and then there is generally a flaw in some of the facets."

Mariam laughed. "What do you mean to express by this——"

He interrupted—"long-winded oration?—Why, simply this—I like you: don't fear me. I *never* shall be in love. I pity you, for a mere child in years, by education and habits abroad, you are a thoughtful, sensitive woman: every thing startles or galls you. Let *me* sometimes claim a friend's privilege, and guide you. I pity your loneliness. Will you promise me?"

She looked up hesitatingly in his face. "Say you will? You have many rocks to steer over before you find a safe anchorage. The sea has just drifted back, and discovered a hitherto unseen one at your feet."

"You are very figurative to-night," she uttered, to turn the tide of his conversation, that she might not be *forced* to look upon the rock she dreaded, and feared he too had discovered—"Have you been recently wandering among the 'shells of ocean?'"

"Well evaded, Miss Lincoln! but I have said enough, some day you will perhaps——"

"Are you going to dance with Mariam, Elton?" asked Adair, laughingly, as he tapped him on the shoulder. "How deeply you were discussing something."

"The weather and ladies' dresses," was the ready answer, "and the imprudence of my friend Bruce, in throwing so pretty a girl as *poor* Kate Bateman, the tutor's

daughter, in the way of all you young men! See, there she is gliding through the dance with your admirer, Miss Lincoln, Sir Philip Montgomery."

"I disclaim any claim to that gentleman," she replied, with a self-possession evidently not unpleasing to Adair; for he caught her hand familiarly, and, raising her gently from her seat, drew the little white kidded fingers under his arm.

"Come and dance with me, Mariam," he said; "don't waste your time listening to Elton; he'll make you as gloomy and cynical as himself."

"I hope, my boy," answered the other as they moved to go, "you may ever give as wise lessons as I have been giving; there's not a sigh at the end of one of them; they all terminate like fireworks, in a *bouquet* of light and brilliancy!"

"Saltpetre and sulphur, Elton, leaving an unpleasant odour behind! I declare Mariam looks quite grave! Come, let us have a schottische!"

"Boys and girls! boys and girls!" pondered Elton; "and what sorrowful men and women their thoughtlessness too often makes!"

"It is quite a fortunate chance to have a dance with you, Mariam," said Adair, smiling really happily upon his partner; "I thought you wedded for the evening to Sir Philip Montgomery."

"And you to Miss Bateman," was the reply.

"Where did you notice me?"

"In the last three dances; it would have been difficult not to have done so."

"By the way, you wish to be introduced to her, Mariam, after——"

"Never mind now," she hastily answered. "We should probably never meet again; so, 'tis no use commencing an acquaintance from mere whim."

Adair's eyes lit up with a pleased look, but he said no more.

Thus terminated Mariam's first ball in England, and the little "black girl" went home happy, despite Angelina's rue and wormwood, of which she had collected a good bundle to enliven the drive home.

Mrs. Adair dozed, yawned, and wondered, "How she could have revoked when Lord Billow was her partner! it made him quite lose his temper! it was very stupid of her!"

For some time past she had been dreaming (a day dream,) how beautiful her diamonds would look set in a coronet! Lord Billow was a widower, and it is not so difficult, as some people think, to convert a partner at whist, into a partner for life! "Hearts are trumps" may scientifically be conveyed on a gentle sigh into the dullest ear!

CHAPTER XI.

A MONTH passed away, a month in a London season! Oh! what a crowd of events jostle one another in four weeks of a young girl's life, during a like period. Mariam had been to balls and operas, *fêtes*, breakfasts, all, and at several she was destined to meet Kate Bateman. Mr. Bruce was, what we have endeavoured in a few words to depict him, one of the best-natured creatures in existence, one of the true old English breed, becoming, alas! nearly extinct, especially in London life. A bluff, unselfish man, never doing an ill-natured action, ever foremost to perform a kind one, and, being a rich man, he possessed a golden weight in society; but all these good qualities were—we grieve to register the fact—built on sand.

Through his intercession, Kate received many invitations; she declined some, for there is nothing more expensive than society, and her poor father's labours could ill supply her many wants. Now, too, those labours were limited; for his sight, of the decline of which we have before spoken, was seriously affected, and Kate was forced to seek pupils herself; and, but for the hope of meeting Adair, she would have declined all society. But girls cannot be wise women at eighteen; she loved,

and though many a bitter sigh told how little hope she *really* had of that love prospering, still hope, like all things, has a counterfeit, and she fancied herself possessed of that real anchor of life, when she said to herself, "Though Richard has never decidedly spoken of marriage, yet I am sure he loves me, and we have been children together; so that the ceremony of asking me to marry him would be absurd between us! He has a hundred times spoken of his love, sought mine; what other proof of his intentions do I require?"

But the heart said nay to all this, and true hope did not exist there. The gilding soon fell from the tinsel thing when Adair pressed her to his heart, and *only* said, "Dear Kate knows I love her, and would not lose her for the world." This was all, and thus it had been for months, and thoughtlessly, not ill done on his part. He had no intention to deceive; he really loved her; but unfortunately our own wishes, ever active but unskilful artists, too frequently give a false colouring to the thoughts of others.

They are again in the little parlour at Highgate, where we first saw them; his arm encircles her waist, and her head leans on his shoulder; but it is not as when first we looked upon them;—*then* she thought only of him as of a dear brother, now, the conscious girl blushes beneath his caresses; neither does she seem happy as then—the face was paler, and a hue of care crossed the fair brow.

"How can you be so silly, Kate?" he said, rather angrily, in reply to some previous words from her.

"How often must I tell you again and again that I am not in love with Miss Lincoln. I must be civil to her; besides, I like the girl, for she possesses many good and excellent qualities; but of this, rest assured, I never would marry her, for one reason alone—that she is an heiress. My wife must not enrich me, and what with my confounded ill-luck lately on the turf, and in other ways, I am afraid to look into my affairs."

"Why not give it up, dear Richard? Why, if you love me, cannot that love suffice to make you happy?"

"Why?—why?" and something very like a sigh from the heart drove a cloud in witness across his brow. "Oh! a man," he hastily added, answering himself, "cannot always be present, even with one he loves, and then I am devoted to the turf. I like the excitement, it amuses, engrosses me, and drives away annoyances."

"Let me share your cares, it will lighten them."

He looked down fixedly and sadly on the face on his shoulder. "Poor Kate!" he said after a pause, "there may be things, you, of all others, could not partake with me. Come," he said, changing his tone, "don't let us be so dull; we don't often pass a quiet evening like this alone, let us take advantage of it."

"Is it true," she asked, sitting upright and looking at him, "that Sir Philip Montgomery has proposed to Miss Lincoln, and been refused?"

"I really think you must do it to annoy me," he said, springing up and hurrying to the window, "always speaking about that girl. Pray, choose some other

subject; I'm perfectly ignorant about it, and indifferent as to whether she has or has not refused him. I only know that last night, at Lady Milton's, she scarcely danced with any one else."

"Dearest Richard," she exclaimed, following him and seizing his half-reluctant hand, "don't be angry. Indeed I spoke of her, as you assured me you were indifferent to her actions. I did not mean to offend or grieve you; pray, pardon me!"

"It is your own fault, Kate; you have worried me so much about the girl, that I am irritable when you name her."

"I won't speak of her again."

"Forgive me, Kate," he said, gently leading her to the sofa where they had been seated. "I am a cross fellow; but many things are teazing me, and I look to you for comfort, not annoyance."

Reconciliations are dangerous at all times where two love, and only one quite honestly. Adair had been led by his mother's folly into so great an intimacy with Kate, that a boy's liking had gradually ripened into affection, and that on so very intimate a footing, that the girl permitted much, which the child had been used to. Marriage with her, never once entered his mind; he did not love her exclusively enough for that; he never asked himself any questions about her, but naturally as when a boy, if annoyed, he flew to her for comfort, blind comfort on her part—for he could not lay bare his heart to her—he scarcely acknowledged to himself all its wishes, and the stern resolve not to seek their accomplishment. Like

too many, he followed on—on, leaving time and fate to lead him at will.

"I have often thought," he whispered, after a pause, "of putting your love for me to the test, Kate: women profess love so readily, and so few understand it."

"How do you comprehend it, Richard?"

"Love has an altar," he added; "on all altars there should be sacrifices offered up to the deity of the spot."

"But not *living* ones now: I will not try to read your meaning further," and the girl trembled.

"What offering is there in marriage?" he said bitterly; evidently he was suffering mentally, from some hidden cause. "You say you love me; *that* would be no sacrifice."

"Oh!" she cried, moving gently from his encircling arm, "I will not feign blindness, or ignorance; but you cannot be serious, you cannot ask me to become that living holocaust, which no fire would consume to ashes, or rather an eternal and ever-glowing one would—the fire of remorse, which peoples the crowded streets with reckless, profane, lost creatures, once pure and holy images of Heaven's creation. Oh, Richard! say you were trying me—say you were!" and the girl clung to his hand sobbing, but tearless.

"These are women's notions," he replied, trying once again to encircle her waist; but she shrank from him, whilst the dilated eyeballs were fixed in terror.

The poor girl evidently feared for herself and her resolution, from a dread of creating in his mind a doubt of her love.

"Mere women's notions," he continued, "instilled into their minds at nurse, sucked in with mother's milk. Leave off that diet, Kate! You are a woman now; you love me—you say you do. I love you, *that* you know; now at present, I can make no promise of marriage, besides, I am exacting—I want love's sacrifice. Come, Kate, let us leave this hateful town; I am sick of England. I shall be off in a week or so, abroad. Come with me; if you love me, you will."

"And leave my father? my poor father? *now* less than ever, Richard, for he is nearly blind," and the unweeping girl trembled violently, the pale lips quivered over the chattering teeth, the trial was severe.

"I see what it is. You fear my honour; you fear that I should desert you, to bring you to the fate of those you have so vividly painted. Fear not, Kate, whilst I have life, mine you shall be. Your father shall be cared for in all things, and some day he may learn to pardon us, for he knows I cannot marry without seriously injuring my future prospects, unless my mother consented, and to this *now* she never would."

"I know that, Richard; but—but,"—she whispered, "she need not know it yet."

"A private marriage!" he exclaimed, laughing. "Oh! the times of romance are gone by. If you really loved me, you would be less cautious, but 'tis better thus. I will go alone, and you will make some good marriage, I have no doubt; you are pretty enough for any thing;" and he rose and walked to the table, where his hat and gloves lay. Quietly taking out his watch, he exclaimed,

"I must be off; I have an appointment at my club about my horses; I am selling off my stud before I go."

She was leaning over the arm of the sofa, her throbbing head buried in her hands; the words "before I go," fell on her ears.

"Richard," she cried, springing towards him. "Don't leave me so coldly! feel for, and pity me. I *do* love you, and, were it only myself, I would say, as I feel, that on your honour and affection in all things, I could rely in peace; but, my father—my poor father! what would he be without me?"

Adair's face worked painfully as she looked up in it; the demon fled, the man was himself again—wayward, but not bad.

"Kate, forgive me!" he cried at last. "I was nearly playing the part of a cold-hearted villain—forgive me!" and he drew her gently to his bosom. "Sister you have been to me; as a brother I once loved you, until my own wayward passions tempted me to seek your ruin; for passions there were, *more* than you dream of, and not all in ungoverned feelings towards yourself. Do not fear me now; no, as Heaven hears me, I would not injure you! Pardon me, and may Heaven pardon my mother for throwing us together as she has done, forgetting our human hearts, and wilful [illegible] vile affections."—His voice was trembling with [illegible]on.

[illegible]ank you, Richard, thank you," she whispered; [illegible]w the hitherto frozen tears fell down. "I know [illegible]ere but trying me; you know my deep affection

for you; it has grown upwards to my womanhood from child's liking; and you will not go—you will not quit England; I should be so lost without seeing you!"

"No, dearest Kate—no; I scarcely know what I said or meant. Remember only this, that I love you well, but not madly enough to have blinded my reason and honour, as I was nigh doing. Remember this, if I ever play the villain again—and now forget and pardon me. I will see you soon. God bless you!"

"You will return soon—very soon—Richard, will you not?" she asked, smiling through her tears, and forgetting the danger she had just escaped.

"Yes, in a day or two; good-bye, Kate, darling; now, don't be sad or fret," and, kissing the upturned face to his, he left the cottage, and rode slowly homeward, thinking of—another!

CHAPTER XII.

KATE'S reverie after Adair's departure was interrupted by the return of her father from town. Bateman had always possessed a quiet, placid manner, which was now doubly such from the blindness creeping over him. Who has not noticed the almost unbroken calm on a face where the eyes lend nothing to disturb it, by the outward and distracting thoughts they momentarily call forth upon its surface? and Bateman's was particularly placid, for by nature he possessed a "take it easy" disposition; now, too, there was something sorrowful in the countenance.

"Dear father!" cried Kate, running to meet him, as he rang at the outer gate. "You are tired, are you not? you look so; surely you have ridden home?"

"No, dear Kate," he whispered, mysteriously glancing round with his imperfect vision, from beneath a large green shade, as if fearful of being overheard; "you know we must learn to economise every farthing now. I got home very well with the aid of my stick."

By this time they were in the passage, and she had taken off his hat, and hung it up on the rack, before entering their room—for they were only lodgers in this humble cottage.

"And what does the oculist say to you to-day, father?" she asked, when they were seated.

"Oh, Mr. Gray gives me no very cheering prospect, Kate! The sight of the left eye is quite gone—the right partially so; but he says he cannot operate upon them until I am quite blind, or the cure would fail."

"A sad prospect, indeed!" And she sighed heavily.

"But he was very kind," continued he; "and refused any fee as usual, saying, in his peculiarly abrupt manner, which startles one so much at first, until you become accustomed to it—'Put up your money; I dare say you have not thousands—tutors seldom have—and you will require a good sum for your operation.' So I asked him what it would cost, and he replied hastily, forty pounds to you, and remember I shall expect to be paid."

"Forty pounds, father!" she cried. "Heaven help us! How are we to obtain that?—it seems very cruel in a man speaking so harshly in such a case."

"So I thought at the moment, Kate; but when I considered about it coming home, I came to this decision, that in such vital cases as those where an oculist is called in, if he were to be too gentle and easy, there are many foolish persons, women especially, as in tooth-drawing for instance, who would fidget about, and try to appear much more alarmed than they in reality were; but where a man startles and awes you by his energetic manner, depend upon it people are afraid to move, and this, combined with his

great skill, may account for the wonderful cures he has performed."

"Perhaps so; and was that all he said?"

"He told me I must live generously to keep up my strength, drink plenty of wine, and avoid all study. And how can either be done? For study is life for both of us, though I can do little now."

"Is it not strange, dear father, that physicians all seem to forget the possible poverty of their patients, and prescribe wine as if it were water; and yet, in certain cases, 'tis life itself. But do they ever ask, 'Can you afford it?'"

"No, I believe not; and 'tis the stranger, because my experience has taught me that medical men are by far the most feeling, kind-hearted of God's creatures —probably from knowing, anatomically, the sufferings which must be endured in many cases, mysterious to all eyes on earth but theirs."

"And Mr. Gray has the reputation of one of the most generous," said Kate. She was thinking of the seemingly cruel and grasping demand of forty pounds to a poor blind tutor.

"From thence," continued Bateman, "I called upon Mr. Bruce and told him, however great my regret, I was forced for awhile—I hoped not for very long—to relinquish the care of his son's education, finding myself quite unable to retain him as a pupil conscientiously; how direct studies, when you cannot discern even the letters clearly?"

And the man's voice trembled with emotion—he had so many fears torturing his heart.

"And what do you think he said?" inquired he, after a moment's silence to overcome himself. He did not await her reply, but continued—"Why, he wished me—tried to force me to come as usual. 'I could surely talk to his boy,' he said—'if blind, I wasn't dumb;' but I saw through the kind-heartedness of the wish, his very bluntness proved his feeling. He did not wish it to appear as a favour, for he put it in this manner—'that his boy would lose the ground now acquired with a new master.' But I could not do it, Kate. I am proud; though so poor, I must honestly earn what I receive; so I declined positively, saying the excitement even of teaching was forbidden me."

"Right, dear father—quite right!" And a faint blush of mingled pride and poverty rose on Kate's cheek. "You could not have conscientiously done otherwise; but do not worry or fret—we shall manage very well. I will endeavour to obtain pupils, and shall certainly succeed in doing so; hitherto, you would not hear of it, wishing me to study my painting. Then, too, I will endeavour to dispose of some sketches. We shall manage all, dear father—only keep up your spirits for Katty's sake." And, rising, she fondly embraced her parent, from whose darkened eyes oozed tears of love for this dear comforter in his affliction.

"But he would force a twenty-pound note upon me," he said, after awhile, "though he did not owe me half, and bade me purchase something for you, my dear child,

as a remembrance from himself, and he said he should come and see us soon."

"Dear, kind Mr. Bruce!" she exclaimed, with feeling; "but we will hoard up the twenty pounds. Why, it is half of the forty!"

"Put it away, then, my Kate; here it is," and he put his hand in a side-pocket to seek for it. Alas! it was gone! After an anxious search, during which the girl's face gradually became paler and paler from fear, his hands dropped powerless, nerveless by his side, when the cruel truth flashed upon him; then the trembling hand pushed back the green shade, leaving the darkened eyes exposed to view, as if it needed only the full light of day to give sight to his darkness, and thought to his wearied mind, lost in conjecturing how he could have mislaid it. It needed all her love to soothe and comfort him under this heavy affliction; for the sum really due to him they had both been reckoning upon for absolute necessaries, and the loss was indeed severe. He had either in his blindness placed it so that it had fallen out of his pocket, or, more probably, partially exposed to view, had thus tempted the cupidity of some passer-by. Be it as it may, it was irrecoverably gone.

"Never mind, dearest father," she said at last, drawing down the shade over his straining eyeballs; "let us bow resigned to Heaven's will. Do not think of it; we can settle all without it—leave that to me;" and taking his hand in both of hers, she smilingly asked (though the smile was a grimace), "and who else did you see in town?"

"No one, darling—stop, though, as I was slowly plodding homewards I heard my name called out, and then a horseman drew up to the footpath; of course you can guess, Kate, who it was."

"Mr. Adair," she uttered, tremblingly.

"And why not Richard?" he asked, hastily. "You always used to call him so; I do not think it grateful on your part to raise a barrier of formality between yourself and one who has been like a brother to you."

"I did not intend to do so," she almost whispered; "but I hear him called so by every one, and, in society, of course I must not say Richard."

"Perhaps you are right. Well, I met him and another gentleman; I knew the voice, I think, though I could not distinguish him well. It seems he and Richard had that moment met accidentally on the hill, for the latter said to him, after both had spoken to me, and inquired about my poor sight—'By the way, what brings you up here in this neighbourhood, and on horseback, too?' To which the other replied—'Oh, I have been escorting Miss Lincoln across the heath!' Do you know, Kate, child," said he, changing his tone, and ponderingly, as if stricken by a sudden idea, "I fancy Richard is in love with Miss Lincoln; I always thought it would be a match, for I have noticed how he, unobserved by her, watched every movement." Here he sighed over the days when he could watch with clear vision; and she, poor girl, sighed heavily over the almost confirmation of her own fears.

"Yes," he continued, "he always watched and sought

her; I noticed this whenever I called there. Well, when his friend spoke about escorting her, he exclaimed, 'Good Heavens, why not have told me at once that she was in this neighbourhood! I will gallop after her! But, which way has she gone?' And he was going to turn up the hill again, when the other interrupted him by a laugh, exclaiming, 'Stop, my boy, you are too late, for on the heath we met a party of equestrians, ladies and gentlemen, and amongst them Sir Philip Montgomery; so, seeing her in so much excellent company, I knew that I was not wanted, an old, hum-drum bachelor like me, so I took my leave.' 'You are very obliging,' answered Richard, sarcastically, 'to be made a convenience of by any girl.' 'Ah! my boy,' he replied, 'learn consistency, and, when you swear you don't care about a girl, do not put yourself in to so great a state of excitement because she happens to go out for a ride, attended by her groom and an old fellow like myself.'"

During this relation, Kate sat speechless, her hands clasped, her lips pale and cold. She could not utter a word; the whole scene was passing before her, as her father unrolled it to her view. He did not perceive her silence, his almost sightless eyes fixed on the ground, he talked on to divert her mind from the recollection of the loss they had sustained. Much more he said of Adair's severe strictures upon Mariam's meeting Sir Philip's party, and permitting Elton—for he it was—to leave her; of it being, in all probability, an arranged thing, and finally of their riding off together, Richard

under the fire of the other's bantering about Miss Lincoln.

There are things which do not break the heart, but they strain its cords so severely that harmony seems ever again impossible. Kate was a girl of quick passions, energetic acts—one to *do*—to *think* afterwards: no mother since infancy to curb her; a father—a kind loving one; but one, before his vision forsook him, blind, mentally blind to the faults, dangers, or necessities of his child, not from any want of true affection, but from natural apathy, and unfitness to be a guide to any one.

"Come now, my dear child," he said at last, "let us forget all about my unhappy loss. I feel you are thinking of it still by your silence; it was to be, so it cannot be helped. Come, rouse yourself, Kate; something will turn up, I am sure. I have endeavoured to banish it from your mind with all my news, have I not?"

"*Indeed* you have, father, and succeeded!" Any one else would have read those words by their tone, as written in blood on her heart, but he noticed nothing particular in them.

"Come, then, I am glad of that," he said heartily; "and now, dear, let me have a cup of tea, for I am very much tired."

"Directly, father," she replied absently; "I will go and see if the servant is at home, for I think I heard her go out," and she escaped.

This was only an excuse to be alone for five minutes, for her heart was bursting. She rushed to her room, and, flinging her arms on the bed, leaned her head on

them and wept bitterly, until aroused by her father again calling for his tea. Springing up, she hastily bathed her swollen eyes, and descended to the little parlour, filled with grief and remorse for having in her selfish sorrow forgotten her poor parent.

CHAPTER XIII.

Our readers must not suppose that Adair was a cold-blooded, deliberate seducer, from what we have depicted in the last chapter. Many a truly generous, upright heart is led astray by the action upon it of some overwhelming influence, making it for the moment reckless, half mad, and willing to seek oblivion in any way. Adair had never had a kind and competent hand to guide him. Under all the false directions into which his mind had been led or permitted to stray by his mother's erroneous method of education, it would have been surprising if he had become faultless, or even approaching to it. Until Elton's return, who amongst all his mentors was capable of gaining any authority over him; who ever spoke justly or reasonably to him; and, above all, who ever endeavoured to make a good man of him by counsel? None—and when Elton came, the boy was man, moulded, knit, immovable. Still, with all his faults, he was not a deliberate villain, though in such things as he had been ready to lead Kate to, he saw no moral wrong, still less sin; but he knew many had prejudices, consequently, without some strong impulse to urge him, he never would have said and implored her to act as he had done. If men would, when half blinded by passion,

ask themselves, "How should I act towards a man who thus endeavoured to warp my sister's honour?" the home thrust, the ever-selfish tongue in our heart's answerings, would energetically reply, "I would kill him!" and this answer would save many a maiden's shame, spare many a heart from undying remorse, and the anxiously sought victim, for whom the altar of sacrifice had deliberately been raised, would become as a dear sister, over whose honour man would watch as over a Heaven-given charge, appointing the stronger, agents, to guard and protect the weaker.

Adair had long been outrunning all prudence in his relations with that most alluring enemy, the turf. Horses he possessed which had won with former owners; with him they were always what is called "outsiders" and "nowheres;" he had lost immensely. Being of age, Elton could no longer claim a right to inquire into his affairs, although he endeavoured to discover much, which he suspected, but he knew not half. Adair had, on coming of age, property to the amount of a thousand a year; the "Grange" was his mother's for life. At first racing had been a choice, latterly a distraction from thought. Of a warm, generous temperament, he had become attached to Mariam, at first, from commiseration; then, as her many charms of person, and susceptibilities and peculiarities of mind and manner, unfolded themselves, the man became strengthened in his affection towards this child of nature. He saw she liked him, but deemed it only gratitude for the first day's kindness towards her, as she often alluded to it;

but that was all of her love for him he ever dreamed; knowing how little she had cause for affection towards his mother and sister, he imagined it almost a struggle in her heart not to dislike him, as akin to them! Oh, how self-deceiving our hearts are! Base traitors! In honest truth, we seldom discover their real treachery until too late to redeem some grievous error they have engaged us in. Once or twice words of kindness—words half uttered, then recalled—had led him almost to hope; but a moment afterwards a cold explanation of them, or an evident avoidance of his society, cast him back again in more than doubt, a certainty that she cared nothing for him. And yet these two loved sincerely and all-engrossingly; but the demon which walks the earth in borrowed robes—false pride—stepped as completely between their affections as if they had never been!

In the commencement, Adair had often jestingly called her "blackey," or made some boyish allusion to her appearance; little imagining that this was the plague-spot ever before her, from an exaggerated fear of the world's contempt for a "native girl"—"mixed blood," in all its most servile current, seemed ever tingling in whispered phrases in her ear. Angelina's envy and malignity had bred this living form of horror, stalking after her, for it was no spectre. Every gentle word of Richard's became mere pity in her idea—pity for her almost friendless state. More than once, after a ball, she heard Angelina say, "With all his faults, certainly Richard *is* kind-hearted and feeling!" and after an instant's pause she would mark her thought by

adding, "How often he danced with you last night, Miss Lincoln!"

For beyond the "Miss" they had never of late advanced towards intimacy. Angelina's fiendish heart had read hers, and this was her triumph for many an annoyance of jealousy and envy towards Mariam.

On the other hand, Adair saw the almost ruin before him, and even if assured of her affection, would perhaps have hesitated in marrying an heiress. This was the false pride, blinding his heart to the fact, that a soul, whether man or woman's, of noble generous mould, knows no joy so great as that of conferring joy. As it was, the thing was out of the question, for assuredly she tolerated him—no more, according to his idea.

We have seen how he was unconsciously led into a tacit (if we may so call it) affection for his playmate, Kate, and how this at times embarrassed him dreadfully. Love her well enough for marriage, he did not; deliberately think of ruining, or calmly undertake it, he was incapable of; and yet, led on by a momentary influence, he assuredly would have taken her from virtue and home, in the mad recklessness of his heart, torn by an unreturned love for another as he thought, and unable to find rest or peace, without that love.

With these influences at work, Adair laid good stepping-stones towards his own ruin. The turf first, then dice and post-obits, were calmly awaiting their turn to come in, and strut on the stage, where they would play their part well, in this new edition of the "Road to Ruin."

When he arrived at home, after his interview with Kate, he was rather calmer than when Bateman left him; the necessity and wish for concealment before Elton, had made him control his irritation about Sir Philip.

Elton, with all his discernment, was rather at a loss about the exact position of either the heart of his late ward and godson, or Mariam's.

He sometimes fancied they were equally indifferent to each other, and that a merely platonic feeling existed between them; then again, sudden capricious movements, on the one side or the other, left him more in perplexity than ever.

"If Dick is indifferent to her," he soliloquized, after parting from him on their return from Highgate, "he is the veriest 'dog in the manger' I ever beheld; for he evidently dislikes Sir Philip's attentions to her."

Adair returned home; it was eight o'clock, the usual dinner-hour at his mother's. He felt little inclined to join the circle, of which Mariam would be a member; he felt too indignant with her for riding in company with Sir Philip—against whom he however had nothing to say, except that which sums up all when a man is at a loss, "He's a conceited fool!"

Whether he was so, little matters. One thing certain is, he really admired Mariam, and fancied she was not quite indifferent to himself—poor mistaken wretch! He never once crossed her mind until his presence brought him before her, and then she looked upon him as a general might on an indifferently good soldier when counting his numbers—he filled up a space.

Adair, in no mood to dine, or be in any way sociable, went to his club, and there, in the dullest corner of the writing-room, sat down and penned an epistle to Kate.

"I have done wrong," he said to himself, as he mused on the interview with her. "I do not love her, that is, not enough to make up to her (if such things can be repaid by affection) for the loss of fame!"

So he penned the following letter:—

"DEAREST LITTLE KATE—After my madness this afternoon, I feel a meeting between us, without a previous explanation, would be embarrassing to both—to me most painful. Katty, I was nearly playing the villain, a part I trust never to appear in, and my conscience accuses me. I know the world, morality, all condemn a stepping aside from virtue; often too, I must say it to our shame, the seducer is the severest judge and condemner, though the last who should be so.

"If there be an excuse for a dereliction from the straight path, it only is excessive love, an impossible barrier to overcome; and yet moralists tell us, I fear truly, that even these will not hold us guiltless.

"Positively I am writing a homily, and I did not intend it. The fact is, Kate, I fear I do not love you as you deserve to be loved. I fancy it is not in my nature. I could not amply repay this sacrifice, this living holocaust, of which you so feelingly spoke. I have been so closely united to you in brotherly affection, that its bands seemed to me of so elastic a nature as to be capable of any expansion, and I tried to stretch them to love. You do not love me—do you?—more than a

brother? Fear me not, then; the past shall never be resumed, except the happy one when you were a dear sister to me, and my lips shall never again utter the promptings of my wayward heart; for my love could not bring you honour or happiness—then it shall ever be but as a fond brother's. As such believe me, receive me, love me.—RICHARD."

Having penned this, he was perfectly satisfied with himself. Our readers will doubtless read covert love in every line; but he did not, in honesty, so intend it.

He wrote thus (oh! the sophistry of man's mind), not to wound her, by disclaiming all affection; whereas every phrase was calculated to impress her with an idea that he durst not, for both their sakes, own what he felt.

But he would not see it thus, and perfectly satisfied with it as a sample of good generalship, and honourable feeling, hummed as he sealed it; and then, after a few preliminaries, being much elevated in spirits, stepped into his cab, and drove to the opera.

Whilst we leave him there, we will look over Kate's shoulder at one she, too, is writing. It begun, through many tears:—

"RICHARD, DEAREST RICHARD—It is always a painful thing to say adieu, even to an indifferent person; for possibly they may have been in some way linked with happy scenes, and losing them loosens the chain of dear memories. Then, oh! how much more sad from one who has been the axis round which our every hope has revolved! I thought my love for you that of a sister until the day (do you not remember it?) when my heart—I will

not say ours—awoke; since when, in my lonely home—lonely for hours—*you* never can know how it was breaking, when I thought of those privileged ones basking in your smile, when I, a poor creature, doomed to toil for my existence, was merely permitted, by well meant, but not judicious kindness, on Mr. Bruce's part, to mingle with the rich and gay, and for a few happy hours to be one near you, with you, on that equality which I could not deceive myself into an illusion of here, in my humble home. Blame me not too severely, dear Richard, if, in the mad desire ever to have you near me and *mine*, I nearly forgot all womanly delicacy, all virtue; for you were holding up to my view the thing we seldom meet in life, a realized day-dream—the vision of being yours. I will not trust myself again; I know how weak my love makes me, and what would my bitter regret and remorse be, if, instead of blessing you by my self-sacrifice, I became your curse—a burden on your conscience; for, Richard, now too well I know you love another with equal, perhaps greater, love than that which you possess for me. And how may that be? for *I*—sinful girl that I am—have checked my affection even for my poor father since I so much loved you, lest I should do injustice to the entire empire you possess over my every thought. But it is over now! We part; you will not know whither I go—it is better thus. When this reaches you we shall be far away. I can write no more; certain of your affection for another, mine will soon be forgotten; certain of my unchanging feelings towards you, I seek no fabled Lethean stream—

fabled indeed!—for those with regret like mine, death alone is forgetfulness. I can say no more, yet I had much more to write; but my heart is too sorrowful, and my brain bursting. Heaven bless you, Richard!—KATE."

We left the writer of this descending to the little parlour, where sat her poor father awaiting her. This letter was not then penned, only resolved upon. Before accomplishing this extreme deed, she had pondered deeply, and on her knees tried to weep over the fault she had nearly consented to. She spoke to herself of the sin of it, the moral wrong, the degradation and vice; but all uttered, not one repentant tear fell from her eyes, they were words—words; for, in the midst of them some memory suddenly awakened of the cause of them, would make her heart smile at the hope of soon seeing him again, and then she would shudder over her own coldness in the path of right, which made her so lukewarm in energetically tracing it out for herself. She felt all her own weakness, she saw safety alone in flight; resolution in his presence would be a phantom passing over those waves which had engulfed the substance of all sound virtue—a phantom seen, and departed—a *feu follet*, luring to destroy!

Poor Kate had lost all a mother's care so early, and her lessons became fainter day by day. Her father never had spoken to her of virtue, he had no real idea of vice; why seek an antidote if you are ignorant of the presence of poison? He loved his child, and she was worthy of that affection; she could do no wrong, so he never cautioned her against it. Consequently her virtue was of

spontaneous growth; it had not been implanted, shielded, and cultivated; it had sprung up, but was the root well grounded?—time must prove.

Some natures, like Mariam's, of vigorous mould, give such strong root to high and noble principles, that nothing may shake or tear them thence; care and trial only give them renewed life. They are the last stronghold of the anchor, which keeps the bark from drifting out to sea in warring storms; they are inherent to the soil; nothing else would thrive there.

But we forget Kate.

"Father," she said, in a low tone, holding her head averted from even his feeble gaze, "I have been thinking seriously to-day about our position; and your unhappy loss has made me more determined in the proposition I have to make you."

"What is it, my child?" and he went on calmly sipping his tea, well assured that Kate must be right. No man was ever more easily led.

"Father, we are here so far away from town, it is fatiguing and dangerous for you; and, as we have no motive for remaining, let us at once remove."

"Remove, Kate!" and he tried to read if she really spoke seriously.

"Yes, father dear—remove. I should like it for many reasons. In the first place, you have no more pupils."

"Alas! none," he ejaculated.

"And, you well know, for awhile we shall have to struggle with difficulties. You would not like others

to see these; and, by well-meant offers of alleviating them, pain and offend our pride the stronger for our poverty."

"No, my Kate, certainly not; but of whom are you thinking? Who need know our affairs?"

"Why, of course, Mr.—I mean Richard—would."

"Surely, dear child, wherever we are he will not be in ignorance of the place?" and he looked piteously up in her face; so helpless he seemed, she was almost bursting with grief.

"I love him like my own son," almost sobbed the poor afflicted man.

"Don't let us think of that," uttered the choking girl. "Don't look back, dearest father, but forward, and pray for the day when we may all meet again in prosperity; and you—you—you"—here she paused, and, swallowing down her tears, rose and encircled his neck—"you not in darkness, but cured—think of that;" and, dropping her head on his shoulder, the bosom heaved to bursting as she held the small throat to keep down the rising storm of grief, for at every word she saw Adair's form lessening to her sight.

"Be it as you will, my Kate," he said, clasping her waist. "I daresay you are right; you always are. But, my child, where will your pleasant evenings be? I loved so much to see my pretty Kate dressed for a ball."

"I wish never to go to another!" answered a hollow

voice, very unlike her usual one. "Besides, we cannot afford it now. When you are well," she added, more cheerfully, seeing how depressed he was, "I can renew my calls on the kindness of those who remembered the poor tutor's daughter. I will write to all, and say we are leaving town awhile by the advice of your physician, until the operation shall be performed."

"But Richard—Kate? I do not care about all the others; but why to him?"

"Because, father, he, as I before said, of all others, will try to force his purse upon us."

"True, Kate—true! But what will you say to him? He must not be grieved or offended. I will not have that done, for I love him as my own; and I don't think, Kate, you like him as you once did. It is not grateful, child; it seems to me you wish lately to avoid and get rid of him." And the dim eyes tried to survey her countenance.

"You are wrong—very wrong," she uttered, almost in a whisper. "But I do not think Mrs. Adair likes the frequency of his visits here." She knew, could she arouse his pride, even this barrier would be overleaped.

"And why not? Was I, were you, not fitting company for him a few years since? Did she not beg of me herself to take you to the Grange as a companion for his leisure hours? Why dislike now what she then begged for?"

The girl's delicacy forbade alike too deeply wounding his pride, or uttering a word of her heart's secret.

"I think," she said at last, "that Richard is, or will be, engaged to Miss Lincoln."

How she trembled over this even in thought! "And, as his mother much desires it, she fears Miss Lincoln's pride, which is great, may take offence at his intimacy here."

"I see what you mean. You are quite right—always right, Kate, dear! So be it for awhile. I leave all to you. When shall we move?"

"Soon—very soon. Perhaps to-morrow. I will go to town early. And—and—should Richard come"—this she said hastily—"whilst I am absent, be silent, will you not? It would degrade us more in our poverty were he to know it, or his mother accuse us wrongly."

"Rely upon me, I will be silent."

Little more was said. Like a child, the new plan seemed at last almost to please him—it was novelty.

He shortly afterwards retired to rest, fatigued by the toil and annoyances of the day. Kate had fought a strong fight—especially for her. Alas! it was not all for virtue's sake; but pride had a good share. The thought of Mariam maddened her, and in flight she hoped to pain, and perhaps recall Adair, without asking herself to what purpose. She was all contradictions, and jealous madness.

"Heaven reckon this night's suffering to me in any

future error!" she exclaimed, folding and sealing the letter she had written. "For I feel, even now, that if I knew him really lost to me, my heart would break; or no—not that," she muttered, after a silent thought, which was—"or falter in its duty to Heaven, to regain him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Narcissus Browne, the clergyman before spoken of, was a straightforward, conscientious, young man—one who laid down his plans firmly and undeviatingly, like the rails of a Great Western, or any other line. No one had ever seen him smile; he was a serious man, and accomplished all seriously. He possessed the resolutely determined look of the pilgrim, who had *not* boiled his peas, and made up his mind to suffer intensely. This world was, indeed, a road of rocks to him, and he *would* see no flowers peeping through fissures in them.

In person he was very tall, and amazingly thin, and generally wore a "dress coat," which looked like an inheritance from an elder brother who had been shorter in the back than himself. It was a marvellous-looking coat, and sat upon his shoulders as upon wings; consequently, it stood well out from the waist. From beneath this, perfectly detached, dangled long, thin legs, with large feet heavily attached to them. As regarded his hair, assuredly he was guiltless of connivance in the death of any animal to procure marrow for beautifying it! He gave you the idea of a man who had been brought up on beef-tea, mutton-broth,

and gruel. But the man had a head, and something like a heart, into neither of which had it ever entered that Miss Adair was in love with him! In truth, of love he had no conception—or, indeed, of any thing stronger than a water-gruel sort of liking.

Angelina's attention to him he really placed on the list of charity, as she always seemed so desirous of assisting him in his labours; and, ever anxious to oblige, he favoured all her wishes. They Sunday-schooled together, catechized, sermonized, and invented hideous clothing for the children—all this to the envy of many not so favoured as she was.

The cause of this preference was simply, that it never entered into Narcissus' head the idea of love on her part. Other young ladies were dangerously *pretty* for a man resolved, as he said, not to marry, or their advances were unmistakeable. Angelina had more than once assisted his memory in some classical forgetfulness: this, and her strong-mindedness of manner, almost made him forget her sex. He thought of her much more as a "good fellow" in his sort of fellowship, than as a possible partner for life. This would have been as inconceivable a conversion to his orthodox mind, as a step towards Romanism. The world is one blind error! When we do not deceive ourselves, somebody else does it for us.

Narcissus put out all light between them, and, trusting to his molish sight, saw only an invaluable helpmate in spiritual duties. Alas, for her peace of mind! Angelina had very mundane thoughts, and one of these

had been, to beguile him to the opera that evening!—But she signally failed; nothing could induce him to go.

"I dislike music," he said; "had I my will, there should be none in churches. I never could understand sensible persons standing up seriously, making grimaces, and uttering hideous, and startling screams. Talk of parrots—that is nature, and I respect it; but you never will persuade me, Heaven intended men and women to shriek words, much better conveyed to the ear in softer tones!"

Something "of the necessity of fashion," she gave utterance to.

"Possibly so; but for a sensible woman like you to care for such a plea, is beyond my comprehension. However, do not let me deter you."

"You have never then been?" again hazarded Angelina timidly; she was a lamb to *him*.

"I thank goodness, never!" he emphatically cried. "I have heard, what is called, good singing, often—that was enough for me; besides, a clergyman has no business there."

She would have given any thing, not to go, but Miss Caffir would have been disappointed. She had invited her, and the woman might be useful to her; she knew not what to do. At last a hope soothed her; she would go to him, a penitent woman, next day, and renounce all such follies for the future. Who knew what this resolution might not accomplish in winning him? for her suit progressed slowly.

This latter hope only sprung up in the course of the

evening; consequently the first part of it was commenced in bitterness of spirit.

Something, too, in Miss Caffir's manner towards Mariam annoyed her; she was too civil by half. Miss Caffir was only a fire-worshipper, adoring the rising sun.

Every one paid Mariam's ingots homage, and the poor girl's clear-sightedness saw it, and the sickened spirit sighed over the dross encasing her.

In the opera-box sat Mrs. Adair, looking everywhere with her *lorgnette* for Lord Billow. Mariam's eyes, unassisted, sought the only one she thought of.

Miss Caffir kept shifting the ivory *lorgnette* to every possible focus, and offering it to Mariam, who quietly but coolly declined it; and Angelina sat in pale yellow silk, which made her all one colour, pondering over her *onquil* love, Narcissus.

"Is not that his lordship?" asked Mrs. Adair of Mariam for the twentieth time; directing her glance towards a *lorgnette* elevated towards their box.

"Really, madam," growled Angelina from her corner, opposite her mother, "it is quite ridiculous your thinking so much, as you do, of Lord Billow!"

"Angelina!" answered her aroused parent, "I consider your tone, in addressing me, most undutiful!"

"Do you, indeed?" was the sneering reply.

"I declare it is!" exclaimed the incorrigible mother, after a long survey; "and now he sees us, he bows, he is coming up. 'How d'ye do?'" she uttered above her breath, as if a sprite were there to waft the words to

the pit; she was tired of the mere pantomime of bowing.

"I think you are mistaken, my dear Mrs. Adair," said Miss Caffir, resolved to be amiable to all, that she might be brought out again; "that gentleman bowing is Sir Philip Montgomery!"

"Of course it is," said the amiable child; "mamma always makes some ridiculous mistake. Now we shall have that bore here all the evening! I daresay he has been invited!" And she glanced at Mariam.

"If you allude to me," the girl answered, quietly, "you labour under a mistake. I should not presume to do so, especially as I dislike Sir Philip."

"Your assignation to-day on Hampstead Heath does not look like it."

Mariam shrugged her shoulders, but deigned no reply.

"I tell you," energetically cried Mrs. Adair, "that it is not Sir Philip. I hope I am not quite blind yet."

"Do, mamma, put down your *lorgnette*, or we shall have all the pack of Miss Lincoln's admirers flocking up here. Fools, and second-rate men, are always gregarious; they would fall alone, their strength is in numbers."

Still Mariam made no reply, perhaps she did not hear; her attention was fixed on some one in an opposite box.

Mrs. Adair and the other two were warmly disputing about the supposed Lord Billow, rising gently, like his namesake, not on the bosom of the ocean, but up the

stairs, to strand himself at the fair widow's feet, when the door opened, and in walked the offending Sir Philip. The "Oh! it is *you*, Sir Philip?" from Mrs. Adair, was very significant, only he did not notice it. His whole attention was fixed upon Mariam, and she, scarcely speaking, turned again and looked at the box opposite. She was certain Adair had been there, and withdrew when she noticed him. "Why was he hiding? Why not come?" were her anxious mental questions.

She knew nothing about his having heard of her canter over the heath.

"Did I not see Lord Billow standing near you, Sir Philip?" asked Mrs. Adair, wounded to the quick by some observation made by Angelina, before his arrival, about failing sight.

"I was not aware if he were," was the reply. "But I should say not; I left him at the Carlton dining with a party of friends."

"Long since?"

"Oh! half an hour. Indeed, I do not think he will be here to-night; he spoke of going to some whist party."

"Indeed! Where? Did you hear?"

All this was between himself and Mrs. Adair.

"I don't exactly remember. Stay, I think he said——"

"Was it Mrs. Bruce's? I know she has a small *réunion* this evening. We are going after Sontag's aria."

"No; not there, I am certain," and he laughed;

for Billow said, speaking of her house, "that she never had a partner fit for a man to play with!"

"I hope you are satisfied," sneered Angelina.

"Partners at whist are not partners for life!" mentally ejaculated Mrs. Adair, laying flattering unction to her soul. "A woman *may* revoke, yet win a man's heart; a pre-occupied mind makes spades or clubs alike, and a thinking man might see this."

"Miss Lincoln is very grave," said Sir Philip, drawing a chair close behind hers."

"Is there any thing very funny being enacted?" she asked, without turning her head.

"No, but music makes one glad generally."

"Perhaps so, a jig, or a reel on a barn-floor. Fine music makes me sad."

"I dislike operas and music generally," said Angelina, paving the way for her intention of withdrawing for the future from the like.

"Dear me, Angelina, how can you utter such an absurdity! Surely Sir Philip must remember your ecstasy one evening here, about a month since!"

This was her mother's *patte de chatte*, a little quiet revenge; for Sir Philip was then to be caught, not Miss Lincoln's avowed slave.

"Pardon me," answered the enraged chameleon; "your memory sadly fails you sometimes, madam. I never expressed such an opinion."

At that moment the box door opened, and Adair, followed by Elton, entered. The former looked pale, and bit his lip when he beheld Sir Philip.

"Are you not surprised to see steady me at the opera?" asked Elton, after the usual salutations. "The fact is—that, 'tis your fault, Miss Lincoln," he whispered in her ear.

"As how?" she inquired in the same tone, looking up with a smile. She began to like this sarcastic man, judging correctly that there was much goodness concealed beneath his cold exterior; she had experienced many a covert act of kindness from him, when others had, in the commencement, persecuted her. Indeed, his were the counsels which had made her treat Angelina with cold contempt, and, standing upon her own dignity, almost defy her to wound her. But even yet she succeeded sometimes.

"I will tell you," he uttered in reply to her question "as how?"—"I was perfectly well aware that both Sir Philip and Richard would be here to-night, and I thought I might possibly be a target, to receive some of the barbed arrows they assuredly would shoot at one another."

He looked so keenly in her face as he spoke, that, despite herself, she coloured.

"What a detestable character that of a flirt is!" said the gentle Angelina to Sir Philip, who was forced, *faute de mieux*, to speak to her. "Look," she continued in an audible tone, "at Miss Lincoln; so much power does she possess over her blushes, that she can call them up, even through her native tint, at the gallant observation of Mr. Elton, whom she avowedly dislikes!"

Elton heard, and raising his voice a little, so that

every tone reached Angelina's ear, said *impromptu*, as if in continuation of a conversation—

"The lady has twenty thousand, they say, so Mr. Browne has chosen wisely; your pet parsons generally do."

Mariam looked amazed; she thought him mad for an instant, until a sly glance towards Angelina drew her senses into the right channel, and she merely answered, "Indeed!"

Angelina sat aghast, not once suspecting the trick the gentle revenge Elton had taken.

"Did you like your ride to-day, Mariam?" asked Adair, as unconcernedly as he could command himself to speak. Elton was watching every turn in the countenance of both, without appearing to do so; whilst Angelina was silently thinking about the horrid rumour which had just reached her ears, and Sir Philip *appearing* to be intently occupied with the stage.

"Yes," she replied; "for Mr. Elton was my cavalier."

Certainly Mariam was an apple of discord, for all her words created emotions; this sentence had point for more than one. Elton was ever the first to collect his senses.

"Your slave for life!" he said, laughing, "and grand bashaw over the rest of my species! I shall recall this to your memory, perhaps, some day, Miss Lincoln."

"What an idiot an old man in love makes of himself!" whispered the recovered bile of Angelina, to Miss

Caffir on her left. "Is he bowing down to the gilded native, too?"

"Man or woman, my dear Angelina, is an idiot in love," he answered as placidly as if the phrase had not been directed against himself; his quick ears heard all. "Who in the mythology," he continued, "had thousands of ears? Can any one tell me? Argus had eyes, Briareus hands, who ears? for I am his or her follower! I scarcely know which is the greater fool, an old man or woman, in love; we should leave that to all you lambkins—eh, Dick?—eh, Miss Lincoln?"

"How prone people are to speak of love—how few understand it!" answered Adair.

"Do you?" asked Mariam hastily, without reflecting.

"Certainly, my dear Miss Lincoln, you *do* understand begging a question better than any young lady I ever met," said her untiring enemy.

Mariam's warm blood was rising in her bosom at all these attacks, but she sighed, and repressed it.

"What question?" she gently asked; "there could be none between Richard and myself, which I might not ask, or he answer, of the nature of affection, for from the first we made a bond of brotherly and sisterly regard. Did we not, Richard? and I am sure neither ever has thought of breaking it; I can answer for both."

"You may," he replied—Elton alone detected the bitterness of the tone—"for you know your own heart, and can read mine as correctly, it seems, as myself."

"Love has many stages," hazarded the hitherto silent, but listening, Sir Philip.

"And houses of call, before taking refuge in the church," said Elton, with a glance at Angelina, who bit her lip.

"How many stages in a woman's heart?" asked Mariam, turning to Elton.

"Two," he answered; "the first, at starting, when, as a girl, she inevitably falls in love with the first pretty boy, however silly, who looks enigmas of affection in her eyes, which she only rejoices too much in endeavouring to solve in her heart."

"How fortunate, Mariam, you never fell in love with me!" said Adair laughing, to hide his annoyance; somehow the conversation displeased him.

"Very," she replied in the same light tone. How deceitful the best of us can seem!

"And the second stage," Elton continued; "second and better one, when in riper years the woman bows down before talent, cleverness, and wit; and assuredly this must be the more dangerous of the two. The girl may see a pretty boy, and change, or loving only a sea-shell, the beauty of which caught her eye when glittering in the sun, and bathed with moisture, it seemed glorious to her sight in colouring and in shade."

"And some day," interrupted Mariam, "she sees it high and dry, dim and dingy, and cares not to stoop and raise it."

"Miss Lincoln," said Sir Philip, "is supposing a man who has *only* a pretty face, as Mr. Elton expresses it. Are the young *all* fools?"

"Heaven forbid!" she replied; "*I* am wise, for I am incapable of love!"

"But not deficient in assurance," whispered Angelina to her friend.

"Come, Elton," said Adair, "conclude your definition of the wiser part; we all know Mariam too cold, or wise, to be led astray, however tempting your portraiture."

"Well, in the riper love the man may be plain; but cleverness has ever a spiritual beauty of its own, even in the plainest face, which speaks to the soul. Then too, some gentle word may possibly have been said, which none other ever spoke so well, and the faithful heart recalls it, should the faithless eye be ever tempted astray; this is the love to be most dreaded for its tenacity."

"You plead your own cause well," cried Adair bitterly, "supposing none of the young, other than fools."

"I beg your pardon, Dick," answered the imperturbable Elton, "for I have overlooked a third stage—the one where antiquity plays sixteen to a boy's love; (you see I give the ladies the preference in my examples, the men are merely passives.) These bring odium on the sex; and, as we do not live in the land where children are privileged to put their progenitors under ground when no longer youthful, certainly this last stage ought to lead to Bedlam, where the lunatic might find that gentle coercion healthful for her malady."

"Mamma, are you listening?" inquired Angelina, touching her mother's arm with her fan.

This unexampled personality, even from the strong-minded, candid ("another term for rude") Angelina, thunderstruck all; for the application was too home, as her mother had been anxiously watching all the evening for the absent lord of her thoughts, and the frequent mention made by her of his name, left none in ignorance of whom she hoped to see.

A dead silence, for an instant, followed the words, then an almost imperceptible titter, checked by an "ahem!"—and all was still. A rap at the box-door aroused them. Adair hastened to open it, and there stood a gentleman with a card for Miss Lincoln!

"My dear aunt is here!" she cried, rising hastily. "May I go to her box, my dear madam?"

"Certainly, Mariam!" answered the scarcely conscious Mrs. Adair. "Richard will escort you!"

A smile, a bow, and—"I may possibly return with her to supper." And the delighted and emancipated girl departed with Adair. Alas! that two so calculated to make life a road of joy to one another, should be bent upon strewing it with the thorns of false pride and mutual deception!

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was an almost total silence of some moments after the departure of Mariam: all felt it in some manner, except Mrs. Adair, who returned to her observatory behind the curtain. It has so often been touched upon—the great difference existing between the love of a widow and a girl—that it seems almost impossible our doing so without the danger of plagiarism; but yet, in defence of Mrs. Adair, we must say, it was not the mere enthralment of a man which she so much desired; it arose from many causes creating one fixed resolve—to conquer, if it were possible of accomplishment. In the first place, she was far from comfortable in her home. Angelina took care of that. Richard loved, but was seldom with her. She liked Mariam; but was too much in awe at heart of the domestic tyrant to show it. Now it would be too late to win the girl's confidence or affection. The opportunity had been lost, and first impressions had done their work in estranging her ward from her. Last, and not least of her motives, was the coronet of Lord Billow; for *he* was the object of her determined fancy. It was no general universal affection towards eligible

persons—if she failed with him, she would try none other. But she really saw no just cause for despair, when she remembered how she was at that moment enacting a Cleopatra's part to a dead Mark Antony, slain by her charms, at even a most matronly age.

Truly, our affection's growth springs often from a very foreign soil! Until the evening of "the revoke," she had never even dreamed of his lordship, except as an excellent partner at whist; but that evening he had been unusually polite, and the clenching spring which closed him in her heart was, "the revoke!" When she did it, he looked at her, as her heart whispered, in a most peculiar manner, saying, "Mrs. Adair—Mrs. Adair!—I should never have expected such a blow from your fair hand!" And then added, smiling, "But I suppose we must pardon your pre-occupation. Happy the absent, present in your thoughts!"—mere gallantry, at which a girl would have laughed even as she blushed; but a widow knew the value of every word. If worked ingeniously, they were all settings for the diamonds of her coronet. From that moment she was in a fair way of revoking in every game where hearts should not be trumps, for she could think of nothing else; and, quite ignorant of her budding affection, the billow rolled onwards, nor dreamed of breaking at her feet!

When a man looks back and hesitates in the case of a widow's pursuit, he will be quite certain of becoming *not* a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, but a marble one, to displace the broken column in the entrance hall of

the family mansion, emblematical of the defunct prop of her existence.

Lord Billow had not the least idea, as we have said, of looking back; nevertheless, she was firmly resolved this time to follow suit. And whilst he was elsewhere perfectly calm, counting tricks and honours, she was playing points with her *lorgnette*, which never ceased its rotatory occupation in the pit, watching for T. K. Hervey's

"Him who comes not."

Thus we will leave her, and peep at the others. Angelina of course was cross. Sir Philip tried to seem indifferent, and chatted to all who would talk. There was but one pleased, and that was Elton, and his joy was purely unselfish; he was glad when the two departed together, in whose eyes the man of discernment read mutual satisfaction.

When Adair put on Mariam's cloak and led her out of the box, it is astonishing how very lazy he suddenly became after the hasty manner in which he accomplished that; his walk up two flights, for Mrs. Wilton was two tiers above them (we have said she was not one of the leaders of fashion), was indolence personified; Mariam, too, seemed in no hurry.

"You look better after your ride to-day, Mariam," he said, after surveying her sideways; this ride seemed uppermost in his thoughts.

"I think it a very delightful, healthful exercise, and preferred it to all others."

"Especially in agreeable society."

"As you say, a nice horse, nice companions, and a quiet lane on a May morning, are luxuries we seldom meet with unalloyed. When we do, they are fairy gifts of joy!"

"You speak *con amore*, and the more agreeable when *impromptu;* pleasures lose by anticipation; the mind is superior in creating to the mere body in realizing, generally."

"I don't understand you, Richard."

"I mean your ride to-day with pleasant companions; what green lanes did you find? and I think it was not *quite impromptu* either, was it? Did you not make up your party in advance?"

"Had I, I should have asked you probably to accompany me. You know I ride almost every day, and you are seldom to be met with; so I asked Mr. Elton to escort me."

"Of course, you knew you had friends expecting your advent at Hampstead?"

"Indeed, I did not! Mr. Elton proposed the road, not I; but how inquisitive you are!" And she looked in his face, had he known how anxiously, to read the confirmation of a hope there.

"Oh, no!" he replied, coldly. "I merely ask for something to say."

Mariam sighed, but very softly.

"What is that for?" he inquired, looking at her; her face was bent downwards.

"Nothing, Richard; that is, I was thinking how

silly of me to fancy any one felt an interest in me, at home. No—not home!" she cried, impetuously. "The home is where the heart is; mine never can feel at ease where fate has thrown it."

"You are candid, at all events," he said, bitterly.

"I am candid," she continued, in the same hasty manner. "I could almost say I hate every one in Eaton Square, they are so cold, or, when not that, cutting towards me; and even you, have lately become like the rest." And the proud lip quivered with emotion.

"If you wish to think so, do, Mariam; but I have remarked, that whenever I speak kindly, friendly to you, and we are alone, you invariably make some pretext for a misunderstanding, as if you feared I might presume on it to utter something unpleasing."

"What do you mean?" And she looked full in his face, and her heart beat high.

"Oh, some unmeaning fooleries, like what others say to you; but don't fear, I am a candid fellow, if a wild one. I never say what I don't mean; so you need not fear being civil to me, Mariam."

By this time, tears were oozing from her proud eyes; only Adair could call these forth.

He looked at her.—"Mariam," he said, stopping, "this I will say, and truly, I have a sincere interest in you, and, for your own sake, implore you to curb your natural violence and susceptibility of temper; I have seen you go into hysterics more than once, and, believe me, if you hope ever to make your home happy, you will fail unless you learn to subdue yourself."

"Is there—is there," she uttered almost inarticulately, "a more painful, soul-sickening thing, than to be ever misinterpreted. You do, indeed, not know me, Richard, and Heaven keep you from half the pain your words inflict upon me! Do you know your own heart well? until you do, abstain from judging the one hidden from you."

She was trembling much; he, not less moved, took her hand, but at that moment the box-door opened, and the gentleman came forth who had been sent by Mrs. Wilton to seek her,

"Oh, here is Miss Lincoln!" he said. Richard dropped her hand, unperceived by the other.

"Will you not come in?" she asked tremulously.

"Thank you, Mariam, no; I will not intrude into Mrs. Wilton's box; I know I am no favourite there; Bruce told me he was going to ask my playfellow, Kate, this evening; I must go and look for her."

"Oh! very well," she spoke cheerfully, but a bitter pang crossed her heart, which the girl's countenance was schooled to conceal. It is a sad, sad thing, when the face, which was created to shew the passing emotions, becomes, by the desecrating influence of the world and its lessons, a mirror of deceit, reflecting nothing but hollowness. Mariam, by the painful position she held at Mrs. Adair's, was losing all the freshness of youthful candour and confidence. Adair's words sent a pang through her heart, and then it became as ice, cold and heavy. She dreaded Kate, and in her suffering quite overlooked the fact, that Mrs. Bruce had a *soirée* that evening, consequently could not be at the opera; whilst

Adair was guiltless of a wilful untruth, for in the chaos of his mind he knew Bruce had spoken of asking Kate to go or come somewhere, and the first thought which presented itself was to suppose her at the opera.

Merely bowing, with a few cold words in salutation to Mrs. Wilton, he turned away, then stepping back, said—

"Shall I return for you, Mariam?"

"Thank you, no; I will not trouble you. I shall probably go home with my aunt."

"Very well, good-night," and away he turned; and after sauntering about in a desultory manner, got into a friend's box not yet tenanted, and there, behind the curtain, watched Mrs. Wilton's. The conversation there was not of the most inspiriting kind; that lady, after a few words of kind greeting to Mariam, asked—

"Is Mr. Adair ill? I never saw any one so much altered as he is of late. Is there not consumption in the family? His figure is so slight, and the changing colour, are indicative of a tendency to that complaint, I think." Mariam could scarcely reply; a new fear was held up to her view. Mrs. Wilton, with much annoyance, observed her ill-concealed emotion, for to her eye, it was so much more than a sisterly affection warranted.

An elderly lady, *vis-à-vis* to her, made the conversation more agreeable, by enumerating all the cases of sudden and untimely deaths which, within her own observation, had accrued from that dreadful disease.

The crowning martyrdom was, when the gentleman before noticed, though not named, for he was one of

those useful bamboos, so perfectly indifferent to us, that we care little whether they are Smiths, Browns, or Greens; the only colouring they cast over our thoughts is, when they shade some one we like from our view by their officiousness in running after our cloaks, fans, or carriages, and being always *mal-à-propos* there, to tuck us under their arms, just as *the* one is struggling through a crowd to reach our side.

This man, we say, crowned her martyrdom by entering into an aggravated list of all poor Adair's enormities—in racing, betting, gambling, &c. &c.; for he nodded and winked the rest to Mrs. Wilton and her aged friend. But poor Mariam saw it.

"Better, ten thousand times better, have remained where I was," she thought; "for there I had——" she did not even admit to herself who she had; but the heart said it. She did not allow them quietly to speak all their calumny against him—she defended him—and even her aunt excused, blaming his mother for all. For, though firmly resolved, if possible, to break off the affection for him, which her keen sight of love detected in her niece, she really felt for Adair, without knowing half the generous nobility of his ill-directed, but manly, proud heart.

Mrs. Wilton was not in Mrs. Bruce's set, consequently there was no tongue there to remind her of the *soirée;* so her eyes looked round and round, up and down that wide range of human faces, for Kate Bateman's.

There is *nothing* more painful than seeking one in a thousand, especially in the blaze of light of an opera;

the weary head, the straining eyes lose all power at last of discernment, and sink and close in despair! In sheer sickness of heart she shrunk back at last, and the sad, handsome face looked so stern, that Mrs. Wilton felt her own kind heart aching; the head leaned against the side of the box, so that all the rich heavy curls of jet fell below the waist, over her shoulders, thrown back, as they ever were, from shading the brow or face—that waist which a hand might almost have clasped; and as she sat thus, apparently intently listening to the music, her soul rose in bitterness against Adair, Kate, herself, fate—all! and she felt that many a word of his had been too lightly spoken, when she recalled the abrupt, and almost unfeelingly rude manner, in which he had assured her he cared nothing for her as a lover.

Whilst she was in this mood, the box-door gently opened, for Sontag was singing, and Sir Philip peeped in; he was an especial favourite of Mrs. Wilton's, having found means of obtaining the *entrée* to her house, the better to meet Mariam. Mrs. Wilton was quite enlisted on his side, and anxious to promote his suit with her niece. Niece we must call her, though she was only as an elder sister, and as such she loved her.

"May I come in?" he whispered.

"Yes," was Mrs. Wilton's reply, with a finger on her lip, "if you will hold your tongue awhile."

His arrival, strange to say, was an immense relief to Mariam. She imagined Adair beside Kate; her fancy had portrayed looks and words, until her brain reeled, and a spirit of revenge, new to her heart, made her hail

the entrance of this man, personally unpleasant to her, generally.

The bamboos we have before alluded to, are generally the most discreet men in existence; nonentities themselves, they have no pretensions to one particular woman, but to the sex in general. It never could have entered into the mind of this one, filled alone with fans, cloaks, carriages, and impossible tickets to be obtained, and all the other wants of women of fashion, that Mariam would deign to dream of him! so he smiled pleasantly upon Sir Philip—a marrying man—as he rose and gave him his own seat beside Mariam, into which he slid, finger on lip, in reply to Mrs. Wilton's command of silence.

Even Sontag cannot warble for ever, divine songstress as she is; and, amidst the frenzied plaudits which followed her song, Sir Philip shook hands with the hostess of the box; and was excessively amiable with every one. Instinct told him he had one warm supporter there, and there was no reason why it should be otherwise; he was well looking (a woman's best reason), rich and titled, no one could have desired a better *parti* for Mariam than he was.

"I am your shadow, Miss Lincoln," he whispered, delighted at a reception from her, different to what he had dreaded receiving; "but 'tis not of you, but of myself, for my most worthy part, the soul, alas! is ever with you!"

"No one," she replied, forcing a gaiety to the surface, to hide her uneasiness of heart, "would imagine from

your perfect ease of manner, Sir Philip, that you were a dismembered creation; for what is mere body divested of soul?"

"The man beside you!—a restless, uncomfortable animal, without pleasure or content, save in pursuing the treasure he has lost, which ever flies him—peace of mind."

Mrs. Wilton, too delighted at Mariam's most unusually quiet manner beneath Sir Philip's advances to interrupt them, was deeply interested in the fate and fortunes of "Linda di Chamouni," and the bamboo talked his little nonsense as contentedly to the dame of sixty, as he probably would have done to sixteen, for it was a series of pretty little anecdotes about himself.

"Is the soul, peace of mind?" asked Mariam, scarcely knowing what she said. "If so, then, why are those who are endowed with much, restless, and of ambitious, energetic spirit? None of these speak peace."

"All souls are not alike. Mine seeks but the calm you might so easily award it—fellowship and union, with yours."

"Sir Philip, my soul is ever waking, ever seeking, ever regretting—think what a very sorry companion it would make for yours, longing for peace!"

She tried to speak lightly, and smiled; and, even as she spoke, the eyes were leading the thoughts away—seeking, as she had truly said. And whilst she sought, in a box opposite, on the pit tier, there was a door opened—a stream of light from the corridor gleamed in, and

she saw a lady and gentleman enter, but she could not distinguish their faces. The lady did not appear *en toilette*, but muffled up in a shawl, and she slid into her place behind a curtain, which was drawn more forward, and nothing but a pretty kid glove exposed to view occasionally. The gentleman did not come forward either, but another did—Adair; and, seating himself opposite the curtained figure, seemed most *empressé*, and the fine face lit up with animation and pleasure. Thus they sat some time, then the door of the box opened again, the gentleman went forth, and still Mariam could not see his face. Adair rose and seated himself behind the curtain, and imagination—reckless, cruel fiend—filled up the picture with the gentle looks and words lavished on Kate Bateman—for she it must be; but who was the man? Mr. Bruce, perhaps, for Mariam well knew the interest he had taken in her as of a father; and the very mystery of their entrance seemed to be a proof of a wish for concealment. And all this imprudence this good-natured man had committed, to enable lovers to meet! How more than clever jealousy is—she is a genius, ever overleaping almost impossibilities, like child's play, but, like Moore's moonlight rambler, leaving common-sense behind.

Mariam arranged all this, and added to it the sudden recollection of Mr. Bruce's *soirée*, which made it clear as could be, that the good-natured man had brought her to the opera first, *en cachette*, to meet Adair—some reason existing, perhaps, to make prudence necessary in their meetings. This was her arrangement through

he, almost inarticulately from deep emotion and unexpected happiness, as he drew the ring from her finger, and placed it on his own; her hand by a sudden movement had resisted, then the muscles relaxed, and the ring was gone.

"Stay!" she cried, with a sudden look of fear, yet scarcely conscious of what had passed—she felt so bewildered, half triumphant, half maddened; "stay!" and she caught his hand before he had quite secured the ring.

"You cannot refuse me—you cannot doubt my love," he said, trembling with joy, so sudden, so unhoped for; for she had coldly, but decidedly, refused him during their ride that morning.

"Then," she uttered—and her voice scarcely evinced the slightest tremulousness, though she was nearly choking with the overwhelming thought of avenging herself on Adair, whatever the cost—"pledge me your solemn word of honour, that to no soul breathing will you utter one word of this, of what has passed between us, until I give you permission."

"I pledge you my sacred word as a gentleman;" the hand dropped his, and he secured the ring. "But it will be soon—will it not, Mariam? I scarcely know what I say—I am mad; for I durst not dream this after your cold reception of my suit to-day."

"Forget all!" she uttered, in a momentary burst of painful thought, passing her hand over her brow.

"Forget all? Not this, Mariam, dearest."

"Oh!" she gasped painfully, and again the hand

passed over the brow. In lowering it, her eye caught the finger where the ring *had* been; she looked a moment in half-bewilderment, and then, making an effort to rise, uttered a wild hysterical cry, and fell back fainting.

Half an hour afterwards, the bamboo tapped at Mrs. Adair's box, and entering, presented Mrs. Wilton's compliments, and Miss Lincoln having fainted from the heat of the house, her aunt had taken her home for the night, and would send for Leah, as Miss Lincoln had asked for her.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAN is a strange creature; it would seem as if his good resolutions were merely on the surface—a coating of gold over a baser metal. And these resolutions he gives utterance to, but places no guard over them, to secure the inroads of a thief in the night to steal them away—that thief, his own human weakness.

Adair wrote the letter to Kate which we have read; perfectly satisfied with it, he posted the missive, and went to the opera. Kate wrote hers in tears, and followed up that act by a *cheval de frise*, the best for such an occasion—flight. But before flying from their humble lodging, the early post brought her his letter, which she read exactly in the sense it deserved—that he still loved her, (though perhaps with a secondary affection,) by whom he was so warmly loved in return; and most assuredly would take his almost daily ride to their cottage at about six o'clock. So he did, and found the place vacant—their present abode unknown! He stood transfixed, not quite understanding it; and with a feeling of self-abasement at the superior judgment of this girl—for, during his thoughtful ride to Highgate, these were nearly word for word his cogitations:—

"There can be no possible harm in my seeing Kate;

to desert her, in her father's state, would be inhuman!" (O wily demon!) "I have told her I do not love her; I did so as gently as possible. Kate is proud; her pride will place an insurmountable barrier between us, and we shall be as we once were—a dear brother, and a loving little sister, darling Kate!"

Here he had a rambling, unconnected train of thoughts, which resolved themselves at last into, "Well! supposing an impossibility, that we, led away by affection, forget all, and live for one another. I never would forsake her, never! and my conscience certainly would acquit me, for I have taken every precaution against it; and I deserve much praise in doing so, for I really love her."

Here there was another confusion of ideas.

"No, I do not love Mariam!" appeared at last legibly, like a previously white leaf held before the fire, on which invisible ink has passed. "I do not love her. She is a cold-hearted, worldly girl, and certainly cares nothing for me, or she would have seen I once loved her—truly loved her! She is a cold, heartless flirt; sitting, as she did last night, all the evening behind the curtain with that conceited fool, Sir Philip—then the history of her fainting; I daresay it was temper, about something or other!"

Hereabouts, he stopped at the cottage. Vain were his inquiries—not a trace remained of the fugitives. "They had quitted for the country," the woman of the house said, "she believed; for Miss Bateman said sudden business called them away."

"Kate will write, and tell me the cause of this sudden determination," he soliloquized, riding away, "and I can go and see her wherever she may be;" and, driven by his indignant feelings towards poor Mariam, he returned home full of love and anxiety about Kate.

What mere puppets we are, when reason and common-sense desert us!

At his club, he found Kate's letter, and then—only then—the better feelings of the man conquered, and he rejoiced in her strength of mind, even while regretting her society. We have said, he was no cold-blooded, deliberate villain; but an excellent man, perverted by wrong guidance.

Kate's letter opened his eyes to the truth of how much he really loved Mariam, by the calmness with which he bore the former's flight, and the bitterness he felt in the thought, that had the latter been less wealthy, he might enter the lists, and, perhaps, win her love; galling him onwards to any thing desperate, he joined a knot of betting men in the reading-room, and scarcely knowing, or caring, what he did, lost a thousand pounds, where his present embarrassments would have made one hundred an act of mad folly. With this pleasant infliction on his mind, he dined gaily, and then, driven by an irresistible impulse, went home to look for Mariam.

It was ten o'clock when he entered his mother's drawing-room, and though the windows were open, through which the sweet breath of many flowers, crowding the balcony, came sylph-like into the room,

though gentle, softened lights were there, there was an air of melancholy, which we often find in apartments, scarcely knowing why. Mariam sat apart at her rose-wood frame, but the roses were left unfinished, and the thoughtful fingers, kindred with her heart, drew the unthreaded needle indolently down each line of canvass—it was the only sound in that room; for though Elton sat there, he was silently watching Mariam over the top of a volume in his hand. Mrs. Adair was reading.

There was an exclamation from all when Adair entered. Mariam's start and momentary pleasure, elicited "Ah!" and then the face looked down in spasmodic trouble, and the trembling fingers took up a skein of silk.

Elton laid down his book, and Adair flung himself into a chair beside him, after a covert glance at Mariam.

"Where is Angelina?" he asked at last.

"Up-stairs probably," answered Elton, laughing, "preparing for her diurnal work to-morrow."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, my dear boy," replied Elton, "where have you been of late, not to know the changes in your own household? Angelina starts off every morning on a mission for the regeneration of mankind, in dark cotton dress, thick soled shoes, poke bonnet, and her hair out of curl, carrying in her hand one of those leathern boxes which deserve the name of 'Temptations,' for, I am sure, they have led to more crime of act, and inquisitiveness, than any thing ever invented."

"'Tis true," answered Adair. "I never see one in the hands of a pretty woman without a strong desire to possess it and her secrets; it seems redolent of them."

"Judge, then, the temptation one of these must be to a thief. It breathes an atmosphere of cheques and bank-notes; but Angelina's is only lined with tracts, written by contract, so much the dozen, by some miserable offshoot of literature, in a garret, over a pint of porter. Inspiration, avaunt! they have only the weight of their parent cup about them. Angelina's leather conveniency also contains a scrap of paper, with notes of the probable arguments she may require in her mission; a smelling-bottle, to revive the fainting, sums up the contents."

"And her purse?" asked Richard, with his eyes ever fixed on the silent, absorbed girl before him.

"Not much of that, Dick; Angelina is a strong-minded, reasoning woman, full of new inventions; one of the set who give a pinch of cayenne, in a glass of water, to a starving man, in preference to an old-fashioned loaf of bread: bread costs money!"

"And all this humbug—for there is no pure charity in it," said Adair—"for the sake of pleasing Mr. Narcissus Browne! It is disgusting to see how these young curates drag all the weak women in their wake!"

"Quite right, Dick, in your expression 'disgusting;' but you have misdirected it—the women hunt up the young curates. They would be quiet, and God-fearing

enough, if the women left them alone, and in their peace, doing infinitely more good, than distracted in mind, as they are, and hunted from post to pillar! It is a thousand pities, among their other gifts, that they have not the one of invisibility as well."

"By your account, Elton, they lead a hard life of it!" laughed Adair.

"Hard?" rejoined the other, "an adamantine rock! every moment expecting to be blasted and blown to the four winds by feminine powder! I consider no life more laborious than a pet curate's; he is always expected to look pretty, be amiable, and, like Sir Boyle Roche's bird, in two or a dozen places at the same time. Talk of soldiers, in time of war, sleeping in their harness; *that* was child's play to the everyday life of a pet curate! Sunday! it is no sabbath of rest to him; he must work therein like a galley slave;—what with Sunday schools, and the well-divided attention to the lady teachers, who go, *of course*, only for sake of the poor children! Then sermons, in which he must watch every word lest he offend the foible of some one; and the dozens of dinners and cups of tea out of every body's china which he is expected to consume, make his cup of life bitter indeed! And after all this, when he lies down in his bed at night, and pulls his nightcap (if he wear one) over his ears, it is with the pleasant anticipation of perhaps soon having to drag it off again, brush up his hair, and sally forth in a pouring rain to visit some one in spiritual fear, which eventually proves to have arisen from an imaginary offence given to himself, a holy man."

"I'd sooner be a coal-heaver than a pet parson," said Adair.

"I sincerely wish you would, Richard," ejaculated his mother, closing her book and looking up.

"What?" he inquired, staring in amazement.

"Become a clergyman," was her rejoinder. "Was not that what you spoke of?"

An involuntary burst of laughter was the reply from both Elton and Adair, even Mariam smiled at the mistake, for she had heard every word uttered; when Adair's deep sonorous voice spoke, every intonation found its home in her heart.

Mrs. Adair became exceedingly indignant at this hilarity.

"Forgive me, mother," cried her son, "but you have made a slight mistake. I expressed a wish rather to be a coal-heaver than a pet curate—a Narcissus Browne."

"I am sure, Richard," she rejoined, "it would be infinitely more to your credit than leading the life you do, among jockeys and horses. I declare I consider the most fortunate circumstance which has for a length of time occurred, has been the introduction here of Mr. Browne; my dear Angelina has become a perfect saint!"

"Long may she continue so!" answered Adair rising, and winking at Elton as he spoke; "but I am sceptical: put a zealous, pious, but old man in Narcissus' place, and I fear the ass would cast off the lion's hide! You have not spoken one word, Mariam," he continued, having strolled across the room, and leaning over her

chair. "Are you not better?" and the voice took an inconceivable tone of tenderness; she was looking so sad, that, whatever the cause, he pitied her.

"Yes, Richard, thank you," she uttered, without however looking up.

"Tell me," he asked, seating himself beside her, "was it really illness, or only a little black blood, gushing forth last night?"

He little dreamed how much his words galled her; it was like an open wound, on which the air suddenly blows.

"You think very ill of me," she said bitterly; "you misjudge all. Forget my half Indian origin, and think of me in Christian charity. I truly fainted, and *not* from temper; I knew nothing until I arrived at my aunt's."

"Poor girl," he said kindly, "I am really grieved to hear it; but you are better now?" and he took her hand.

"What have you done with your Indian ring, Mariam?" he asked suddenly, looking at the unadorned finger.

A thrill passed over her whole frame; she looked vacantly a moment at the hand, then withdrawing it from his grasp, said, in a low tone, "I don't know. That is, up-stairs, I suppose."

"How strangely you speak!" and he smiled. "You have a Lady Macbeth air of tragedy in saying that; but you shall not take your hand away. You do not want to work—I shall forbid it—I wish to talk to enliven you. Remember, Mariam, if you ever part with that ring, it must be to me. I always admired it."

"I would to Heaven you had it!" she involuntarily uttered almost to herself; but he caught the words, and still more, tone.

"Why, why? Is there some magic attached to it? I know you are superstitious!"

"No, no, nothing," she hastily answered. "Let us talk of something else. Were you pleased with the opera last night?"

"Yes, much," was the vague reply. Her strange manner gave rise to a question in his mind, whether she was not what is termed in India, "a lunarian;" many there, are, without positive madness. This idea, and the certain feeling we sometimes have of relief, amidst the regret consequent upon the absence of some one, whose presence, though pleasing, inspires a dread of after burdens on our conscience, made him more than usually gentle with her. He felt glad in his heart that Kate was gone, though an unacknowledged feeling even to himself.

"I should have returned to escort you to our box again, or to Mrs. Wilton's carriage, but that you were so well surrounded." This was bitterly uttered.

"Where, and how did *you* see that?" she hurriedly said, looking in his face. She had withdrawn her hand from his, and both were clasped together on the frame, as she asked this question.

"Where from? Why, from my mother's box, where I sat all the evening."

"Not *all* the evening. You were in a pit box opposite ours some time."

"That was Mrs. Frampton's; but did you notice me?" And he looked earnestly, half hopefully, in her downcast countenance.

"Then she, Mrs. Frampton, came after Miss Bateman left; but I did not see any one else enter. I thought you had accompanied this lady and Mrs. Bruce to their *soirée*."

All this was spoken in a hurried manner, and made doubly impressive by the questioning eyes raised to his; while the unclasped hands parted, and one shaded the brow as the elbow rested on the frame, the other was clenched in almost terror, awaiting the solution of her doubt.

"Of whom—of what are you speaking?" and again he grasped her hand. "I declare, Mariam, I sometimes think you mad, you are so incoherent. What do you mean about Kate? She was not at the opera. Frampton and his wife came to their box—she, *en déshabille*, kept behind the curtain—you know them. I have not seen Kate since yesterday afternoon, and she and her father have left town."

"Heaven have mercy on me! Heaven have mercy on me!" ejaculated the agonized victim of her own waywardness, covering her face with both hands. "I think I am mad!—mad indeed to have done it!"

Adair was really alarmed for her reason—not one gleam approaching the truth crossed his mind—he sat in stupefied astonishment—they were apart from the others in a second drawing-room, but within sight

and hearing. Elton had engaged Mrs. Adair in a discussion to withdraw her attention from the two.

"Mariam, Mariam!" he said at last, trying to withdraw her hands, pressing on the brow; "dear little Marie, tell me what is it you mean?"

She withdrew her hands with a wild wrench, and flinging back her hair, which had partially shaded her face in its bent position, she fixed her gaze in agony upon him, and exclaiming—"Oh! Richard Adair, you little know what you have been the cause of,"—with one hurried movement, it was almost a bound, she flew to the side-door, tore it open, and fled; leaving him convinced of her almost lunacy.

"Leah!" she exclaimed, in wild emotion, as she entered her room; "come with me, come—dear Leah. I must see my aunt this night, I cannot rest."

"What em bein doin to Missy?" cried the woman, starting up, her face darkened with passion. "Missy Angelina do it?"

Mariam shook her head, as she paced the room, wringing her hands.

"Madam Adair, den?"

Again the head negatived the anxious question.

"Massa Richard?"

Mariam's only answer was a deep, suffocating sigh.

"Leah pray him dead!" uttered the Indian girl, with intense fervour. "All bad here, but Massa Richard de wosser; he man, and he treat poor dear missy ill!"

"Do not hate him, Leah!" exclaimed her mistress, almost choking to subdue the emotions she was struggling against. "I, only, am to blame."

"Missy too good, too gentle," said the woman, whose turbulent feelings flashed in her black eyes. "Ebber since we be come, Massa Richard give her trouble. Missy," whispered she, drawing close to Mariam's ear, "Leah not care for danger—Leah only poor Ingy gal, made to serve missy—she, Leah, give Massa Richard someting to drinky, and he nebber tirsty no more—nebber tease him dear missy again!"

The whisper came as the whistling sound of a serpent in Mariam's ear; she felt sick at heart, a cold tremor shook her frame, the dilated eyes fixed themselves on Leah; the hands were raised before her face, as if to repulse some object of horror. Step by step she moved backwards, her gaze still fixed on the girl, who, alarmed herself at the emotion she had given birth to in her mistress, stood cold, immoveable as a statue.

"Merciful Heaven!" burst from Mariam at last, as she sank on a chair, covering her face with both hands. A moment after Leah was on her knees before her, clasping hers in earnest prayer.

"Missy, forgive em!" she cried, whilst the big tears rolled down her dark cheeks. "Missy forgive em; but him lub bibi so dearly, him not bear to see him in trouble. What Leah's life, so missy content? Leah tink missy hate Massa Richard."

"Leah," uttered her mistress, withdrawing her hands from before her affrighted sight, and laying one

trembling one on the black, crisped head of her too faithfully attached companion; "I have nothing to forgive; your crime would be mistaken zeal and love towards myself. There is another whose pardon you must ask—God's! Leah, you did not think of that—did you, dear Leah? Even if I hated Mr. Adair, it would have been a fearful crime. But I *do not* hate him. I alone have been to blame; it has been my own wilful temper. God give me strength to subdue it!" Her voice trembled as she looked upwards, but the face was calm, and purified from all distorting passion. "Pray, dear Leah, and pray that I may never lead others to sin, by my ungovernable passions, as I have now done, though but in thought."

The poor, faithful girl's head was bowed on her knees, and she wept bitterly. Mariam threw both arms round her neck, and, raising her to her bosom, clasped that dark, uncouth face—[yet all so loving towards herself]—to her heart, and a deep, mental prayer was uttered, from that hour to labour in that most difficult task, the subjugation of ungoverned temper. She felt her own ebullitions of passion before this untutored child of nature had led her to conceive this heavy crime.

It was a lesson she never forgot, and one of those heaven-sent ones, to call us to repentance, and reformation.

"Come, Leah," she said at last, rising calmly in outward seeming, but the heart trembled still, "we will go to my aunt; I *must* see her to-night. We can quit the house unseen. She will bring me back; and nothing will be said by Mrs. Adair."

Without uttering a word, the girl obeyed her every movement; she was too much affected by all Mariam had said to her to look up; but in contrition and sorrow, followed silently down the stairs.

"'Pon my word," exclaimed the saint of her mother's creation, Angelina, hastily entering the drawing-room a few minutes afterwards, "your ward, madam, chooses nice hours to scour the streets alone, with that horrid accomplice of hers. I have just seen them close the hall door, furtively, after themselves, as I came from my own room!"

"Impossible!" cried her mother, looking hastily round: "she is in there, working;" she turned as she spoke from the book to the inner drawing-room, and there sat Adair alone, intently counting the threads of her embroidery, and pondering on Mariam's words and strange conduct.

"Richard!" called his mother, "where is Mariam?"

"'Pon my soul, mother, I cannot say, but I know where she ought to be, or I am much mistaken—in Bedlam; she is as mad as one who has slept beneath the moon's light."

He sauntered into the larger room as he spoke. Elton started from a well-feigned doze; he had lost not one word of all. Even Mariam's last words had reached him; he had closed his eyes, to think more uninterruptedly.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. Wilton, though accustomed to the eccentricity and vivacity of Mariam's character, was not a little surprised to see her at the late hour in which she arrived in Russell Square.

Her manner, too, surprised her, unlike her usual one when driven by annoyance, or Angelina's sarcasms, to seek her aunt's society; it was calm, though full of emotion.

"My dear child!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton, with that tenderness which belongs to no age, for the young apply the term to the young as the fondest they can find, to express their love, "what brings you hither at this hour? No annoyance, nothing unpleasant, I trust?"

"Dearest aunt," said the other, warmly embracing her; "I came, because I could not rest until I had unburdened my mind to you. I want you, dear aunty," and she enfolded her closely in her arms, "to listen to me, comfort, guide—all! I will not to be wilful again, believe me; only forget how old I am, how young you are, and let me be to you as one of your little girls—lead, command, love me, 'tis all I ask." And the girl we have seen so turbulent, so overwhelmed by passion, sat down beside her aunt-sister, and, with their arms

around one another, she told her astonished listener all that had taken place the previous evening at the opera, between Sir Philip and herself; even Leah was not made a party to this confession, but dismissed to the society of Mrs. Wilton's maid.

When Mariam concluded, her aunt pressed her still more closely to her breast, and sincerely congratulated her on the choice she had made, as Sir Philip was a favourite of hers.

"Stop!" cried Mariam, trembling, scarcely knowing how to conclude; "hear all, and then, do—oh, do!—act for me, and break off this most mad, hasty engagement!"

"Break it off, Mariam! You must indeed be mad to ask me to do so, or think of such a thing yourself. Why enter into it at all, and now, in twenty-four hours, seek to escape from it?"

"I have not told you all," answered the agitated girl, hanging down her head in self-abasement; "but I will. I came here to-night to do so—to shew you my heart as it is, dear aunty, with all its faults and wilfulness. I—I!" she hurriedly continued, looking down on Mrs. Wilton's hand, which clasped her own trembling one; "I once denied my love for Richard Adair; in doing so, I uttered an untruth. I do love him better than any thing in the world—better even than I love you." And the full dark eye fixed itself a moment, in the simplicity and firmness of truth, on the other's face, and then the black lash, like a heavy cloud, veiled it again, with all its fire. "I feel that, were I quite certain he loved

another, it would almost kill me. This is very unfeminine, I know, unloved as I am by him; but, loving him as I do, I *never* can marry Sir Philip, so break it off, dear aunt—pray, do!"

Mrs. Wilton sat almost aghast, at this hurried, wild confession, and prayer.

"Why, in Heaven's name, then, have last night voluntarily accepted him, Mariam?" she asked at last.

"Don't I tell you I was mad! I did not know what I did," was the hasty reply. "Try if you can, aunt, understand the half-savage nature I possess—'my Indian one,' as Richard sarcastically calls it. I knew he hated Sir Philip for some cause, and, maddened by jealousy, I hoped to revenge myself upon him by my self-sacrifice. As if he cared what I did!" she added, despondingly.

She then related the scene in Mrs. Frampton's box, and her own delusion, in consequence of the belief that it was Kate Bateman.

"And what can you hope for in this vain affection, my dear child?" asked the kind tongue which forbore to chide, or speak cold worldly reason to the poor, ungoverned girl, nestling on her bosom, as if there alone she had an abiding-place for her aching head.

"Nothing, nothing!" was the sad reply. "I know he does not love me; sometimes he pities—he did to-night, for he saw I looked ill—and one gentle, feeling word from him is more than *all* the whole world beside could utter!"

"My poor Mariam, my poor child!" said the gentle sister woman.

"Oh, yes!—poor indeed! For all of love I could offer him would be received with contempt, with rejection; and I love well, aunt—oh, I can love well! Do not think me forward in all I say." And the eyes looked up so pleadingly, as the soft hands closed round the neck, bending over her. "But I was brought up a woman from my infancy; I never was a child. They, my dear parents, loved me so wholly, that they prematurely matured my thoughts, that I might approach nearer to them, and sooner comprehend their love; and just when it had ripened into full age, they left me with my heart overflowing, to rest it all on this one who despises, if he do not hate, me! Oh, how I detest his pity!" she cried energetically, impatiently struggling to rise. Then, as by magic, the muscles relaxed, and she sank again, without power to move, in the arms around her; for before her eyes flashed Leah's, filled with deadly thoughts, and she remembered that her impatient temper had awakened them. She had, indeed, registered her vow of amendment above.

Mrs. Wilton, with that strong good sense, tempered by so much exquisite feeling, which characterised her, uttered not one word; she only pressed her the more closely to her heart, and kissed the cold forehead. She knew nature *would* have its sway, so she allowed it to exhaust itself before urging the colder dictates of reason.

"All I ask," continued Mariam, after a pause, "is

that my engagement with Sir Philip may be broken off. I never shall be cared for by Richard; but, oh! do not ask me to marry another—I cannot!"

"Mariam, now you are calmer, let us talk of this affair seriously. You love Mr. Adair. You think your maiden modesty will prevent your ever betraying yourself to him, so it may—*wilfully*; but, Mariam, when we love, our heart is like the throne of an usurper, surrounded by traitors! The tongue need not speak, but the lip will quiver—the lip will utter no word of affection, but the voice will tremble, and one unguarded intonation of a kindly phrase, betrays all! The eye may try to look cold and stern, but it will quail before his; and there is far more real eloquence in the eye which dare not, than in the one which boldly avows all, self-confident of a return. My child, Mr. Adair will read you as an open page—*I* have, from the first. How much more, then, will not the man before whom you in secret bow down in helpless affection?"

Mariam truly felt the justice of all this, when she recalled her hurried exclamation on leaving the room at Mrs. Adair's. Her words, her flight—all had traitor voices, and she felt as if she durst no more appear before him.

After a long-continued conversation with Mrs. Wilton, this lady, though most unwillingly, promised to see Sir Philip on the morrow, and endeavour to break off the engagement—but the task would be a most difficult one; for how give any comprehensive explanation of Mariam's change of disposition, without betraying what,

in love to her maiden modesty, she would not have known; and with a sigh for her hopes destroyed as regarded her niece's marriage with Sir Philip, which would have effectually precluded the chance of such an event with Adair, Mrs. Wilton prepared to accompany Mariam home.

Too fond of the girl not to have kept an anxious eye on all surrounding her, Mrs. Wilton had made herself well acquainted with Adair's position, and feared now, more than ever, that when all his own resources should fail, he would seek in Mariam a loving, but despised wife, that hell-created thing, to patch up his position by her fortune. It shews how the wisest, best, keenest of us may be led into erroneous suppositions by prejudice. Mrs. Wilton hated the whole family, and wrongly judged the noble heart of Adair, which was leading him into every excess, sooner than be suspected of interested motives, where strong affection alone swayed it!

Not even her aunt's presence saved Mariam from a shower of reproaches; Angelina had so well worked on her mother's mind during the girl's absence, that Mrs. Adair coldly, but decidedly declared, that for the future she should exert the authority of a guardian, and forbid any visits unless sanctioned by her consent. Mrs. Wilton bit her lip, but spoke calmly, as she could command herself to do, for the girl's sake, and terminated her great effort by begging Mariam might be permitted to visit her on the morrow. Under the influence we have spoken of, this was formally refused, on the plea

that her escapade that evening deserved punishment, not indulgence; and this wild heart, with all its strong womanly emotions, was compelled to bow down to the punishment of a child.

Mariam avowed she had acted wrong in leaving home at that late hour; she united her prayers to her aunt's, for she expected on the morrow to see Sir Philip, after Mrs. Wilton should have explained all she could explain to him, and from his own lips hear her freedom pronounced—but all was said in vain. Mrs. Adair felt sleepy, cross, and disappointed in the book she had been reading; and these minor causes made her strengthen the repulsion Mariam felt towards her, by undue harshness, at a time when the girl needed kindly guidance and support, and not alone turning from her herself, but she alienated the one whose strong good sense would have confirmed every virtue, eradicated many a fault.

Mrs. Wilton left, and as she embraced her niece, she whispered, "I will do all I can with Sir Philip to-morrow."

Mariam crept sadly up to her own room; to reach it she had to pass Adair's, the door of which stood ajar. He was talking loudly to some one, who said, "Dick, I have watched both closely; that girl loves you, and you her; why, then, play the fool?"

To which the other replied sarcastically, "Pshaw, Elton! she is an arrant flirt, and loves to chain all to her car; and, *quand même*, I would not for all the world marry a girl with so violent a temper as hers; she would stab me some day, if I offended her; and I very candidly confess to you, I have a prejudice in

favour of fair women,—she is more even than gipsy in appearance."

"Fair women!" replied the other, thoughtfully. "Kate Bateman, perhaps."

"Ay, Kate Bateman, my pretty Kate, I wonder where she is now!" and the bosom sighed audibly—the empty words were for Kate, the sigh for Mariam; and she had involuntarily, unthinkingly stopped at the sound of the voice she loved so well, and at the last words and deeply-uttered sigh, fled down the passage, her hands to her ears, to shut out further sound, lest it should madden her quite.

Mariam passed a night, one of those bitter ones which a feeling heart alone might know; even Leah, her faithful slave at heart, for she knew but to blindly obey every look of her mistress, was excluded from all share in her wild despair; at the bottom of her soul there was a fearful terror, which made her conceal her anguish from this girl. Let not our calm northern readers start, nor turn in disgust from this almost child, but strong woman at heart, with all the passions of her half Indian birth, warring within—but we portray nature. Mariam *durst* not tell Leah, for her own heart was bursting with revenge; where, then, might not the other's sympathy lead her? Her sight was dizzy with the loud-tongued passion in her heart. Adair had been so cruel, he had treated her so kindly, he had made her love him, and *almost* at times persuaded her of a return, and what had it terminated in? Bitter irony and contempt from him; yet, amidst it all, she

bowed to a wholesome lesson—he hated her for her temper, before all else! Oh! she would correct this; she would subdue herself. Let the struggle be of life and death, he should not fear or despise her more; she would, at all events, win his respect—let his love go! Love is a falling star, bright in the heavens one moment, gone for ever the next, leaving a greater darkness for the memory of its brightness.

The morning found that young face so wan and sad, that even Angelina forbore to be sarcastic; perhaps she divined that nothing could move her victim to any emotion, for indeed it seemed as if the mechanism of existence alone remained, the Promethean spark, gone again, to its native heaven!

Adair was at breakfast, and most kindly, nay, more, affectionately asked if she were well?

"Quite, thank you, Richard," was the calm reply, without a pang seen or felt. She was cold and resigned, prepared for any annoyance.

"Then why are you so sad, Marie?"

"Am I? Well, I will try and not look so. I was reading much last night, and this morning, perhaps, it has given me a thoughtful appearance; I will endeavour to shake it off," and she smiled, but only with the lip, the eyes were unmoved. A true joyous smile quivers on the lash of a half-closed eyelid, sending forth coruscations, gems of mirth; she had been reading every line he had ever written, whether a letter in absence, which often had been the case, or some of those tiny things when present, which we treasure so well when we love.

"You should not read at night, my dear Mariam," said Mrs. Adair kindly; "it makes the eyelids red, and draws the face, and subdues the fire of the eyes fearfully."

"I will not do so again, madam," was the gentle answer, "if it displease you."

"We shall be burned in our beds," was Angelina's only approach to sarcasm.

"You must really be ill," said Adair affectionately, as they sat alone after breakfast; Angelina was off, as Elton had described her; Mrs. Adair, it little matters where, thinking probably, and arming herself with charms, to conquer the turbulent Billow, and so Adair and Mariam sat alone.

"Shall I read to you whilst you work?" he continued.

"Yes, if you please, Richard."

"What shall it be?"

"Any thing you choose."

"Well, then, I think," he said impatiently, galled by her coldness, "it had better be Gray's Elegy; that will suit your humour; for you have a funereal countenance; or Sterne's Maria, that might enliven you."

"Poor Maria!" fell from her lips. "I know nothing more perfectly sad, than her melancholy. It was the cheerfulness of sorrow, bearing its cross at the *foot* of a mountain, knowing how much more severe each succeeding step would make it."

"'Pon my soul, you are in a pleasant mood, and I, who have stayed at home to rouse you from your stupor, whatever the cause."

"Have you really, Richard?" and the eye half smiled. "It's very kind of you."

"Then put down your *crochet;* those eternal twitchings of the finger fidget me to death. I believe the inventor of *crochet* had St. Vitus' dance; put it down, and let me talk to you," and he took her unrefused hand.

"Do you know, Mariam," he commenced, caressing the little softly warm fingers as he spoke, "I want to understand you thoroughly. I imagined I could read any girl almost at a glance; you have completely beaten me. If you are not mad, you are the most incomprehensible creature I ever met in my life!"

"Why? do you for an instant think me insane? Surely not."

"'Pon my soul I have been tempted to do so; for you change every moment, and for no visible cause. I part with you all smiles, and seeming happiness, when we meet again you are either sad, or so nervously susceptible, that one can say nothing to you."

"It is temper, Richard," she replied; and the lip gave an uneasy quiver.

"Temper? Ay, that may be a part of it; but look here, Marie; I often call you ill-tempered to teaze you, but I do not think so badly of you as I say."

A bitter smile crossed her arched lip, as she almost despised him for what she deemed his deceit, and paused in silence to ask why he was deceiving her.

"You are very silent," he continued, looking in her thoughtful face. "Do look up; I want you to tell me something, will you?"

"If I can, certainly."

"Then look up, for I shall read more than you may

choose to utter in your eyes; they are very eloquent, Mariam, beneath that heavy canopy of jetty silk, which shines in the sun, like as if the dew were on it."

Once how such words from him would have made the quick warm blood gush to her brown cheek, bronzing it in mellowness of beauty. Now she sat like a statue, all the feeling was at her beating heart, which, enclosing its sensations within its inmost recesses, throbbed almost to bursting; she felt every word as a taunt.

"What do you wish to know?" she asked, looking up, but the eye was stern and cold.

"Don't look so serious, dear Mariam; I want you to tell me what you meant last evening by those strange words as you rushed out of the room. Do you know they, and your flight to your aunt's, have caused me a sleepless night of thought?"

"*You* lose one moment's rest on my account!" she asked, sarcastically; then added, before he could reply, struggling at the same time to withdraw her hand in disgust at his supposed heartless trifling; "but I forget, I am treating seriously that which is mere *badinage* on your part now, as much as my conduct last night was a sorry attempt at mystification."

"You do not mean *that*, Mariam? do you? can you?" and his face became grave, and painfully amazed in expression.

"I do truly, Richard," and she smiled in triumph at the wound she inflicted on his pride, as she thought.

"Truly, you are an odd girl—an incomprehensible one!" As he spoke, a shade passed over his handsome

face, the drooping lid veiled the disillusion written in the downcast eyes, and the relaxing grasp left the hand free. Adair had said truly, a sleepless night gave reason and common sense a chance of being heard, and these overcoming false pride, he resolved to know the true state of Mariam's feelings towards himself; solve the doubt which made his heart throb with a hope, engendered by her wild expression, her too evident agony, from some mistake in which he bore a part. And now, after all this fond hope—this subjection of his pride before his affection—she had merely been playing a fool's game of mystification!

Let us all beware of pride—'tis the darkest demon walking the earth in sheep's clothing—calling itself honesty, uprightness, and dignity;—it blights many a fair land of promise—absorbs many a noble outpouring of a generous heart!

This made Adair the previous evening utter what he did to Elton, instead of candidly confessing, what no man need feel shame in owning, even though he love vainly, that his heart is given to a worthy object! This made Mariam now enwrap her mind in darkness to the fact; a child might have read in his eyes and manner that he sincerely loved her. "And what you said about the ring; I know you much prize it—wear it almost as a charm—was *that*, too, but stupid jesting, to ——" he paused, his aching heart nearly betrayed what he would now so anxiously conceal.

"Mystification, Richard,—all mystification!" She laughed, while the eye looked up in proud triumph

upon him, till the very lashes seemed to laugh towards heaven in upturned, quivering richness.

"Then, by Heavens, Mariam, you are the most accomplished actress I ever met in my life! I pity the unhappy wretch who ever bows down before you!" As he spoke, he rose with haste and heightened colour from his chair.

"Do you not pity him?" she exclaimed, with flashing eyes and proud smile;—"so do I, Richard; for I am incapable of loving. And yet, I suppose, I must feign so to do, some day; Mrs. Adair wills it, and she is my heart's guardian."

"Your heart's guardian!" he contemptuously answered, standing before her. "You do not possess such a thing; or, if you do, 'tis a pomegranate one, in a casting so tough that it is scarcely worth the trouble necessary to perforate it!"

"A knife will do it," she added, and the tone was changed to one sad and thoughtful. "A knife is a keen word, spoken perhaps at random; but what then? The fruit is sour, bitter, distasteful to most persons, even when attained!" She sighed despite herself.

"Mariam!" and once again he was beside her, grasping her hand, whilst his own trembled—"Mariam, you *do* possess soul, let me read it—if for another, let me read it as a brother, and be *that* at least to you; if there be power of divination in you, guess all I would say, and do not think me less than I am, in my thought of you."

"I have a prejudice in favour of fair women!" then

his sigh, and "darling Kate," rang in her ears. With a cold, almost repulsive, feeling at the contact, she withdrew her hand, and folding both calmly on her knee, she said, looking in his face—

"I have nothing to confide to any one. Had I, it would be gladly spoken to you, Richard Adair, for you have been kind to me amidst unkindness—generous, where all else were ungenerous—had I a secret to confide, a counsel to ask, it would be to you—from you. Forgive me my foolish jest—you have come in brotherly affection to seek my confidence, and advise with me for my happiness. I am very grateful to you—it is *so* kind, amidst many other occupations, to think of me!" Saying this, a hand, the coldest and calmest, was laid upon his, but the pressure was as ice, so soulless.

"Marie, Marie!" he cried, in bitter feeling, "*I* will now say, in truth, what you but parodied: 'You little know what you have done!' God bless you, Marie. If all were as sincere towards you as I am, or were you so to yourself—for I fear you are nurturing deception—you would be a very happy girl!" He pressed her hand in his, and stooping, kissed the brow before she could draw back, and, without a word more, quitted the room.

"Triumphed!" she uttered between her closed teeth, standing erect, with her whole face denoting the wild joy of that feeling. "If it had killed me, he should never have read my heart. What—read, and trample on the poor dark thing! No, no, no, Richard Adair! Marry some fair girl—go, marry Kate Bate-

man, and see if her heart will love you as my Indian one could! Oh, man! how heartless the task you undertook to-day against a poor orphan child, homeless here!—to win her to a confession, then scorn her because she is darker and mellower in colour than your northern fruit! It was not worthy of you, Richard; for I love you for your worth sake more than your handsome person! Beauty wins senseless admiration, not love!"

Had he seen her then, could he have doubted? She stood so strong in her love—so saddened in her countenance; and those eyes, so flashing before, were cast down, and through the heavy silken cloud rained summer's strong rain. She started at a coming footstep —brushed away her tears—and, once more, the fingers seemed the active agents of an unoccupied mind, as she plied the *crochet*-needle.

A servant flung open the door, and announced "Sir Philip Montgomery." Almost a scream escaped her, as she sprang from the seat she had sunk into a moment previously.

Sir Philip entered; he was very pale, but calm and collected in manner.

"Miss Lincoln," he said, as the servant closed the door, "I may esteem myself fortunate in being enabled to see you alone."

She merely bowed, and dropped again on her chair, feeling, from his manner, that he had had an interview with Mrs. Wilton.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When Adair passed from the drawing-room, where the conversation with Mariam had taken place, he entered a smaller one adjoining, opening on the staircase, and she naturally expected that he had passed out; but, as he opened the door to do so, he heard footsteps on the stairs, and drew back, unwilling, in his frame of mind, to meet any one.

The persons ascending were Sir Philip and the servant, who had been standing at the hall door as the former drove up; in consequence of which he was admitted, without startling any one by his rap, or giving notice of his arrival. As he only inquired for Miss Lincoln, he was at once shewn to the apartment where she sat; and thus he entered suddenly, and most unexpectedly, as we have seen.

As Adair closed the door again, he flung himself on an ottoman, and half burying his face in the pillows, sank into a train of wild, regretful despair. All around was forgotten, unnoticed, unheard.

He was only reading from his too faithful memory, the events of the past months, since Mariam had been his mother's ward; and as he traced, day by day, the growth of his affections, since the first hour wherein

he rushed up-stairs to comfort a sad child, and found in its place a handsome young girl, in all womanly beauty, before him; he felt broken in spirit, from the sudden crushing of all his hopes, the strength of which he knew not till then. What was he, what should he be, without her? He had been afraid to look on uncertainty before; how now, then, bear the assurance of never being loved?

For her calm collected manner had so completely deceived him, that he felt the utter hopelessness of ever watching a ray of affection spring from so unpromising a sky to him.

Lost in these bitter thoughts, he heard nothing that passed in the next room, save a vague murmur at first, which he imagined arose from his mother, probably, and Mariam.

Sir Philip spoke lowly, without apparent suffering; but when we feel much, the lowered tone conceals what else would be betrayed in the voice's weakness, and incapability of firmness, when highly strung.

Mariam had only motioned to a seat, which he quietly dropped into, at a short distance from where she sat.

"Miss Lincoln," he said, "you are no doubt well aware whence I come?"

"You have seen Mrs. Wilton?" she uttered, in a half questioning, half affirming tone.

"I have, by an invitation from herself which I received early this morning."

Mariam's fingers trembled over the work in her hand; her head was bent down, she could not look up.

"You are silent," he continued, "and in that silence I feel the almost vanity of my attempting to obtain a more lucid explanation of the bitter mystification I have been the victim of, than the incoherent one Mrs. Wilton had to offer me this day, when soliciting, in your name, a release from our engagement of a day's date, willingly entered into by you."

"Forgive me, Sir Philip, if you can," she uttered, dropping her work, and looking up with clasped hands.

"It was wilfully, cruelly done!" he cried; "for I am not a merely trifling man of fashionable life, to woo to-day, forget to-morrow. Miss Lincoln, I most sincerely, truly loved you, and have, since we first met: I shall not forget you in a day—or years, perhaps."

"Forgive me—*pray*, do!" was all she could utter through her pale lips; his stern calmness convinced her of his sincerity.

"You are moved," he said, without replying to her prayer, and a gleam of hope crossed his countenance. "Let me endeavour to win your love. I will do so, untired by coldness, unchecked by many futile efforts; I will not intrude upon you, neither will I inquire why you have thus decided, now; I will mark it in my thoughts as a girl's caprice, from maiden pride, not to be too easily won, and I shall love you the more dearly if, a second Rachel, you bid me only win you in years!"

His voice was mellowed by its intenseness; and, drawing near, he took the unwilling hand, which trembled in his grasp.

"Come, Mariam—still my Mariam; let me hope so—hope it may be. I am as a mariner, looking out for his ship at sea; I see a white sail in the distance, 'twill be all I am watching for; she will cast her anchor at my feet, eagerly awaiting her on the beach, and I, rejoicing, shall claim my own dear bark. Let it be no allegory, dear Mariam, but a realized truth; say what you will, or rather, leave all unsaid, and let me keep this ring." And he held up his hand, on which her pledge glittered.

At this moment Adair awoke up from his stupor of despair. For some moments the hum of a man's voice had reached his ear, though very indistinctly. He knew not whence it came; the last words alone fell clearly on his ear, for, in the energy of his speech, Sir Philip raised his pleading voice. Adair looked up in bewildered amazement at the words, "Let me keep the ring."

"Sir Philip," she replied, struggling to speak calmly, and distinctly enunciating every word, "I can only supplicate your mercy and pardon. Excuse I have none to offer. Think me what you will, term me as you please—flirt, untruthful, unwomanly, all: only this believe, that I am a very sorrowful girl, a most sincerely repentant one, for the part I have acted towards yourself, for I believe all you say—I,

surrounded by deception, and the suspicion it engenders of all, believe you sincere."

"I most truly am, Mariam!" he exclaimed, with energy, "and as truly love you."

Adair had risen hastily from the ottoman; his first impulse was the natural one to every honourable mind—to quit the spot, and not listen to a conversation not intended for his ear. Before he could accomplish this, she named Sir Philip, and the name arrested him as if he were suddenly paralysed. Only one idea crossed his mind—this was a lovers' quarrel. For some instants he heard no more than the name, which rung in his ear; her subsequent words sounded in unconnected confusion there. Sir Philip's last heartfelt prayer came distinctly from the outer room. With a hasty, unheard step, he reached the door to fly, though he would have given worlds to hear all, even if it should confirm his fears.

As the servant closed the drawing-room door upon Sir Philip, he noticed that the one of the lesser one stood ajar; he shut it noiselessly, and almost unconsciously, imagining the catch of the lock strained, turned the key. Adair heard nothing of all this—he had flung himself on the ottoman; and now, to his excessive annoyance, feeling the awkwardness of his position, he found himself a prisoner. What could he do? To enter the room where they were, would only still further add to the embarrassment of his, and their position. Should they, too, by some untoward chance,

come into the one where he was, what could he say? If he coughed to warn them of his presence, he should be brought into contact with the other, and this, he felt, would thoroughly unnerve him. In no very pleasant mood, he once more sat down on the ottoman, and, taking up a book, endeavoured to fix his attention on the pages; but this was the vainest effort of any he had as yet essayed. What between his own bitter annoyance, and the thought in his mind about the other's prospering suit, word after word fled before his vision, without reaching below the surface of the troubled stream of his vexed spirit. Sentences were as floating birds on the waters—the power of comprehension, a tough weed far below, imbedded in the slime and sand! He tried not to listen, until the very tension of his nerves made every word as an arrow piercing his brain.

"Hear me, Sir Philip!" exclaimed Mariam, with energy, "and then judge me as you will. If I did not believe you to be an upright, honourable man, one incapable of taking advantage of a woman's confidence, however much that woman may have injured you, I should not give utterance to what I am now about to confess. I love hopelessly, but unchangeably love another. What the barrier between us may be, it is not for me to say. But in a hope—a mad one—of forgetting him—of perhaps loving you, I accepted your hand at the opera—the rest you know; it was the insanity of a moment—for the next I felt how vainly forgetfulness would be sought, how sinful,

and utterly impossible it would prove to marry another. My illness there you were witness to; but it was last evening alone that my heart became perfectly open to myself, and there I read despair! Forgive me—this is all I can ask!"

"Pray, pause," he said, again taking the hand she had withdrawn. "I will be so patient in my hope—so watchful to win you, let me only make the endeavour—we can but part at last!"

"It must be *now*," she answered, in a tone of almost calmness and decision. "I would not bear the weight of this engagement, even though but a conditional one, a single day longer. I know myself; I should but be deceiving, if I bade you hope—yours, or any other's, I never can be—his I never shall!"

"Then," he said, dropping her hand, and coldly rising, "it only remains for me to restore you your ring—the charmed ring your father left to bind a daughter's loving gift of herself—take it, Miss Lincoln; it has been desecrated. I do not envy the man it shall bind to your car, for it will be no bond of peace or love; it has played a part as unconsciously base, as the trained brute which serves as decoy, luring its wild companions to slavery or destruction!"

Mariam hung her head, speechless at the bitter taunt, almost nerveless from suffering and the shame he had cast upon her mad, unreflecting act at the opera. She held out her hand, and clasped it on the ring he offered her, scarcely knowing what she did; an instant afterwards her hand relaxed, the poor pledge of her rashness

rolled to the ground, as she buried her face in both hands, and sobbed convulsively.

Sir Philip stood an instant irresolute; his heart yearned towards her. Truly he forgave all; for, loving himself, he could excuse all; but the galled heart was still too unbending to admit its weak pardoning, and far too proud to sue again. He stood an instant looking upon her, then quietly reaching his hat and gloves from the table, turned, and without a word, quitted the room.

One only fixed thought, and a just one, was in his mind—Mariam loved Adair; he had before suspected that, and his return of her affection; but if the latter were the case, why her despair? As he pondered on all, he hated him the more, for probably not loving the creature he would have given worlds to possess the affections of. Something suddenly crossed his mind in his homeward drive about Adair and Kate Bateman; their evident (to say the least of it) friendship for one another, to which he had been a witness at Mrs. Bruce's and elsewhere.

Adair stood like one in a dream. This is a trite old comparison; but none other could accurately describe his state—he had dreamed, and now awakened. The state of the case as regarded Sir Philip was clear; her words explained all. For an instant his heart seemed bursting with hope; some hope we dream and awaken from, to see it fade away—the last lingering star, which Aurora has chased from the sky. His thought was, when he remembered her wild expression the previous

evening about the ring, and the harm he had been the cause of, that she loved himself, but, for some strange motive, concealed it. He was on the point of rushing forward, forgetful of pride, doubt, all, and beseeching her to admit it, if his own affection found an echo in her heart; but a touch of ice was on his hand, a cold, stern, young tone in his ear—they were her parting pressure of his hand when his love had nearly betrayed itself, and her candid and unmoved admission that she had been mystifying him.

Then his harassed brain sought for a solution of the enigma of her confession to Sir Philip, that she loved another; but whom? A light broke through the intense darkness at first of his conjectures, and he recalled to mind Blair, the young officer who had brought her to his mother's; she often spoke of his kindness whilst on board, and hoped, probably vainly, that they might meet again. Adair had judged correctly the tenacity of her character, and in that more than ordinary firmness, read her hopeless and unchangeable affection for this Blair. The idea became fixed in his mind the more he pondered; and, wrapped in his bitter thoughts, he was only startled from them by the opening and re-closing of the door of the next room, and then all was silent. Without once asking himself what he should say in excuse for his presence there, he strode towards it, but it was vacant; Mariam had fled.

He had half intended accusing her about Blair, yet why should he? She had never deceived him; he had

hoped for love, where she had alone felt gratitude and kindness.

As he stood thoughtfully looking on the vacant places where the two had sat, something caught his eye on the carpet; he advanced, stooped, raised it—it was the charmed ring; in her haste she had never once remembered it. He held it in his hand—a strange, eager desire overcame him to possess it; it was not quite superstition, but something appertaining to it.

"Mariam," he muttered, "you said you wished I had it; well, at least this desire of yours shall be gratified. I will be master of this desecrated bauble, and when you love, and are happy—well, then, at whatever cost to myself, I will restore it; and your love, and his, whoever he may be, shall obliterate the stain, on this virgin gold."

He placed the ring on his finger, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER XIX.

"PASSED away from his memory as if I had never been his 'little sister Kate,'—passed away, and quite forgotten! It is very, very painful to be nothing, where we have been so much. I sometimes wish I had not persuaded my dear father to quit Highgate. I should sometimes have seen him at all events, and that would have cheered my heavy hours of labour—heavy, indeed —without one solacing voice; for now, even, my once too hopeful father has lost all energy of thought, and sits fretful, peevish, and, worse than all, in darkness."

Here the girl, whom our readers will at once recognise, sat perfectly silent, whilst the fingers busily laboured over a sketch before her. "I wish we had not quitted Highgate," she continued, whisperingly, like one who, afraid of the utter silence around, breaks it by speaking aloud. "Yes, I wish we had never quitted the place; for, armed against my own weak heart by the certainty that he loved Miss Lincoln, I should not have been in the danger which might else have proved an overwhelming torrent, down which I should have rushed headlong. What a thorny path in life is the one of unsolaced toil—how the brambles cling to, and wound us, at every step! We labour. Why? For

the very life which burdens us! Yet, 'tis a law of nature, to which all bow. A law of nature—so is love; the first—and I have cast it for ever from me!"

Here the thoughts became again silent ones.

Kate, like many a poor weak woman, could not contentedly walk forward in the cold path of duty to Heaven and herself, without almost regretting the brighter one in imagination, where there would be a loving voice to soothe, another to share, and bear even her error. Kate looked scarcely beyond the present hour, and so looking, wept over its solitude, nor thought of the greater reward awaiting the struggle which terminates in victory, and eternal rejoicing.

Poor Mr. Bateman was totally blind, and their poverty alone prevented the operation from being performed, which might, most probably, restore him to sight, and the means of future existence. They were both too proud to solicit from any one, especially from Mr. Gray, the oculist, who had peremptorily told them he could not undertake the case unpaid; and the feeling that this sum, so small to thousands of the rich, stood between him and the light of heaven, made Bateman so nervously irritable, that poor Kate's heart was nearly broken. One thing alone preserved her from a false step, whence only ruin could have ensued; this was wounded pride. Had she imagined Adair for one moment regretting or loving her, she would have flown to him, in all self-confidence and virtuous intentions; but hell is indeed paved with the like; they are ready-hewn stones, only awaiting the pavier's hand.

There were days when her task appeared lighter than upon others, as there are those when the darkness of the soul gives place to calm and peace; and in such she toiled from early morning until almost morn again, to support her father, and, if possible, save a little towards obtaining his restoration of sight. It was a holy task, and a reward awaited it; pity 'tis, that too frequently we ourselves turn blessings to curses. Kate had removed to a totally different neighbourhood when leaving Highgate; they were residing in a very humble lodging near Brixton, having left no trace behind them, to direct Adair; at first she had endeavoured to obtain a few pupils, but the payment was not even sufficient for daily bread. After many bitter privations, she betook her to her pencil, and here her success was a trifle more promising. A lady who resided in their house, recommended her to apply to a person likely to give her employment in sketching, principally for the use of schools, as her style was bold and good. To this person, who kept a stationer's shop at the west end, Kate went, and, by the advice of the lady who recommended her, stated her own and father's case. The result was, the purchase and ordering of several clever efforts of her pencil, with the promise of mentioning her case to as many as possible of the charitable, without, however, publishing her name. We will pass over a month, since the day Adair became a forced listener to Mariam's conversation with Sir Philip. The former had endeavoured by coldness, and well acted indifference towards her, to obliterate any impression his

last words, at their interview, might have left upon her mind; and no two persons ever more completely deceived their own hearts than Adair and Mariam, when they imagined indifference or apathy had conquered their warm affections. Indifference is unrestrained, natural, and agreeable—*never* sarcastic, as Adair was frequently with Mariam; she, poor girl, suffered silently, without complaining, and, in her darkness, wondered why he should hate her so bitterly, as, without loving, we may be kindly in manner. When violent passions are restrained for awhile in the human breast, they at length find a vent in some, too generally crooked, road, leading to destruction.

Thus it happened with Adair: his early taste, which had never quitted him, for the turf, but only in his short hour of hope lain dormant, awoke in all its vigour; and the heart thought itself perfectly consoled and occupied, when it became like a betting-book, filled with running and winning horses, stakes, odds, hedges, &c. &c. But unfortunately for himself and his career, the winners were generally not on his side of the book; he was far too upright, noble, and rightly proud, to make himself friends of those who, well bribed, would have directed his judgment, full often at fault.

Ruin stood before him, but he pushed past her, and rushed on; so she followed, nothing daunted, in his track. Debt rose upon debt, like the walls of some new building, which was only rising to crumble to earth with a crash. None knew his embarrassments, not even Elton suspected their extent; and, in the

excitement of this life, Adair found a temporary forgetfulness, or rather callousness, respecting the future fate awaiting his prospects.

This deviation from the subject of Kate was necessary for the better explanation of events which follow.

More than once, in his headlong career, he had thought of her, wondering where she could be; for many an anxious search, on his part, had but ended in disappointment. In seeking her, not one thought of wilful wrong crossed his mind; but he wanted that which the first experience of woman's love in a mother implants in every breast—a woman's heart to share his many annoyances. Men are excellent good fellows in our prosperity and pleasures; but none, not the dearest friend man ever possessed, could stand equal, or compete with woman's sympathetic affection, and solacing watchful care, in sorrow. None, we are certain, will be ungallant enough to deny this, not even the veriest bachelor in existence, unless the lip belie the conscience.

Vainly Adair sought; no one had seen or heard of her. A brief explanation of the necessity of her quitting town, and grateful thanks for their kindness to herself and father, reached the Bruces, and there the clue was lost. Fate walks the world, ever busy in good—good it must be, though not always so to our imperfect insight into futurity; for *all* things are for the best, pre-ordained so; if we turn them to evil, the giver and ordainer is not the less great and just.

One day Adair entered a stationer's to make some purchases; he was in an inner shop, looking over fancy

articles displayed there, when a lady, closely veiled, entered the outer one. He was not within sight of the person; but as a voice—a low, gentle one—struck on his ear, he advanced hastily a step; the speaker's back was turned towards him; she was conversing with the master of the shop. One glance sufficed for Adair; the long-sought Kate stood before him! He was on the point of rushing forward, but a sudden feeling withheld him; it was not pride, for this vice was no part of his nature, if we except the false one which rose out of the virtue of an independent spirit, and caused his separation from Mariam—no, it was nothing of meanness which made him draw back into concealment, before the plainly, almost shabbily-clad girl who stood there; it was a fear of paining her, or causing embarrassment before a stranger. Had he perceived that there existed no prospect, without openly claiming the acquaintance there, of again renewing it more quietly, he would have advanced, but the first words he overheard convinced him that she was no stranger, but one in some manner connected with the interests of the stationer.

"I have brought the sketches," were her words; "I have made some little delay, but my father has been so unwell, that I hope that will plead my excuse."

There was something so saddened, so spirit-broken in the tone, that Adair felt his eyelids moisten—Oh! they are the warmest hearts in men, those which send up the dimness of a tear to the eye, for a suffering woman—those who forget a mother's milk have been

nurtured like the young of that fabled bird, which feeds her brood on her blood, and in that red stream they forget all gentler emotion, which makes man love all the sex for his first love's sake—a mother.

"Time enough—time enough—my dear," answered the master of the shop, kindly, to Kate's entreating words; "I am sorry your poor father still continues so poorly."

"He is indeed very ill, and so desponding," was the reply.

They had moved close to the door of the inner room, to avoid being overheard by persons at the counter.

Adair drew back trembling, fearing they might enter where he was; his innate kindness and delicacy made him dread lest the sudden meeting, if unavoided, with himself, might cause her so much emotion, that an unpleasant and injurious impression would perhaps be made on the mind of one who evidently befriended, by employing, her.

However, the evil he dreaded did not take place. After some further conversation, Kate quitted, but not before receiving a fresh order from the stationer, to be completed and brought home in a few days.

Adair had entered this shop by chance, and personally unknown to the master. After making several purchases, he strolled up to the counter, whereon he had noticed that Kate's sketches had been thrown. His first intention was to follow her, then he reflected upon the impossibility of doing so, without creating some suspicion or conjecture in the mind of the man

beside him; above all his own desire to see her, rose the unselfish dread of injuring her, so he resolved to trust to that kind chance which had so far befriended him.

Taking up a sketch, he commenced attentively examining it; every line was familiar to his eye, he had so often sat beside her, watching her so employed.

Every touch seemed to recall her more vividly to his memory. There he sat again; one arm round the waist, which, in pure girlish innocence, shrunk not from the brotherly clasp. Then he gradually beheld that vision fade away—a dissolving view; and in its place, growing to life, came the woman's strong love, and his own passionate appeal to her heart, which had nearly yielded to his summons for sympathy of feeling.

"I see, sir, you are a connoisseur," said the man at his elbow, "by the close scrutiny with which you are surveying that sketch; it is boldly and finely executed, and we find little difficulty in disposing of them."

"'Tis indeed a masterly work," answered Adair, startled from his reverie; "some known artist of course is the author?"

"As yet, no," was the reply. "It is the labour of a very young lady, toiling for so good a purpose that I will, if you will permit me, sir, give you a slight account of her."

Adair bowed, and the man then informed him of all he so well knew, except the sequel, namely, that her father was totally blind, and she toiling day and night

to procure the forty pounds necessary for the operation to be performed, which should restore him his sight.

"Had you seen this young lady a few weeks since, sir," continued the man, "you could better judge how hard she is toiling to attain her holy purpose; for she is so worn and pale now, that I have difficulty in recognizing her."

No words could convey an adequate idea of Adair's suffering as these revelations reached him; there was a tinge too of remorse. He felt he had partially been the cause of driving her into exile from all who might have befriended her. He was a man of much energy of thought when any circumstance called it into requisition: in a moment his resolution was formed, not to betray to her his knowledge of her position, unless forced by circumstances to do so, lest he should again drive her to sorrow, or further trouble; strong in his good intentions, for all the true nobility of his soul was called into action, he firmly resolved not even to inquire her address; fearful of his own vacillating stability in a good cause, fearful of themselves if they met. He therefore merely contented himself with the purchase of one of the sketches, which would oblige the immediate order of another, as these had been bespoken; and, to avoid the possibility of discovery, he gave a friend's name and address, for the articles he had purchased.

As he quitted the shop, his heart expanded with a secret joy—that joy we feel when a good action has suc-

ceeded, perhaps, an erring thought. It is the angel's triumph over the power of darkness. Another idea, too, had taken possession of him, but its accomplishment was more difficult than many will deem probable—this was the sending anonymously a fifty pound note; it was not the manner of sending, but the embarrassment of procuring that sum. There are many who, considered in affluence, will probably fully comprehend his position. Adair was more puzzled to obtain this amount than at one time he would have been to have raised thousands. Debt had long been familiar to him. Some day, he knew, so did his creditors, that all would be paid; meanwhile, horses, carriages, all were going to the hammer, and, until some fresh sacrifice of property could be made, he was almost penniless, and too proud to appeal to any mere acquaintance's purse for a loan.

As he walked on in a profound study, how he cursed the almost ruin he had brought upon himself, and, in the injustice of his anger, accused poor Mariam; but for his love of her he would never have committed the excesses he had been guilty of. One thing he was firmly resolved upon—*not* to seek Kate. All Adair's noble, generous qualities of heart, had been aroused by the sight of her distress—seeing her, too, he felt how little he really loved her with a passionate love; no, all his sensations were those of an attached brother mourning over a sister's distress. Yet so weak did he know his heart to be, so much did he dread any act which might seem as an ungenerous right, claimed for the service he purposed by some means doing her and

his former tutor—that he resolved *all* should be done anonymously; and, to prevent his own weakness from marring the good deed, he would abstain from even inquiring her address, but send it in a letter under cover to the stationer.

With all these good thoughts in his mind, he walked on lighter at heart than he had felt for a length of time, and yet he was pondering on that least pleasantly exciting subject—his embarrassments, and how to overcome them. When we speak of his want of money, it was not the *vulgar* want of wherewithal to buy a coat or hat; no, it was the necessity of a man of fashion, who has half a dozen horses in his stable, but cannot exactly afford a couple of hundred pounds to purchase another which had struck his fancy. Debt was nothing, ready money was the difficulty.

One day, when he and Mariam had been cantering in Rotten Row, a lady passed them on a beautiful horse, black and glossy as jet, sleek as if dripping with water, proud as only a horse looks, or a tall queenly woman in a rage, at some wound inflicted on her pride.

Mariam raved about this animal; this was in *his* hopeful days, before the late cruel explanation, and dealer after dealer was sought to find one like it. She had so handsome an allowance by her father's desire, that few of her wishes were unaccomplishable things as regarded mere money.

After immense toil and scheming, with the aid of one of the best fellows, honest as the sun (which scorches or kills you often with *coup-de-soleil*)—a horse-dealer,

Adair had the satisfaction of hearing that the lady had been disgusted with her horse, and was in treaty for another from the same honest fellow. Thus Adair saw himself the optional possessor of the one Mariam had coveted, and he chose it should be his; there was something more consonant to his feelings in lending it to her, than that she should *by right* possess it. There is nothing sweeter, dearer, lovelier, than to give to or oblige those we love.

All his energies had been brought into play to raise three hundred pounds, the price demanded, as from day to day it was expected to be in the market, and he had been promised the first refusal.

When we have chained some one in thought with every link of our existence, though we lose their love irrevocably, we may learn to bear with that; but it is, perhaps, the most painful part of our loss, the severance of every familiar thought in which they lived within us —the very essence of our being. To have been so much *to* them, in our hour of hope, and then not, perhaps,

"Even a passing thought,"

when the cold reality lies exposed to view, is more almost than a stoic could bear unregrettingly. This Adair felt more keenly than all; and, if possible to rivet some links of this broken chain, he endeavoured to possess something of sufficient interest to Mariam to bring them in contact, and create a mutual interest. We grow very childish when we truly love. Love is, *indeed*, well represented as a boy.

All this Adair felt, and feeling thus, by dint of Jewish

assistance, which had already become a necessity to him, he found himself the master of three hundred pounds, and hourly expecting to call the horse his own. All this we detail, to shew how really good his heart was —how unselfish in its generosity—and how capable of any sacrifice which another's wants might require. We wish to show all that was truly worthy in Adair, for there may hereafter be much to require redeeming virtues.

As he walked on, pondering about Kate's poor father, and the difficulty of *immediately* procuring the fifty pounds—for this was a case brooking no delay—he suddenly remembered the three hundred pounds in his possession. He also recollected the sacrifices and difficulties he had had in obtaining it, already deeply (as he was) in the Jew's hands; but not for one moment did he hesitate. He knew that if the three hundred pounds were not forthcoming in an instant, another would purchase the horse. He could not ask assistance from Elton, without exposing his whole affairs. Sell his other few remaining horses, would be to acknowledge what he was so anxious to conceal. A glance at all this, and then the noble heart rose far above all selfishness.

"Come what may," he said, mentally, "Kate shall have a hundred pounds. Forty pounds for the operation, and the remainder to keep the poor old man until he recovers his sight. Confound that stingy Gray, the oculist, who would not perform the operation in charity!"

With these thoughts in his mind, lighter at heart

than he had of late been, Adair hastened to his banker's, and, without a sigh, drew a hundred pounds. The next step was to send it to her: this he accomplished without much difficulty. Enclosing the notes in a letter, he forwarded them to "Miss Bateman, artist, care of Mr. ——, Pall Mall."

In this letter he merely said,—"A person hearing all the circumstances of Mr. Bateman's sad case, encloses the above amount to enable him to obtain the best assistance his case requires, without delay. An acknowledgment of the receipt of the hundred pounds in the *Post* will meet the writer's eye."

The handwriting was too much disguised for Kate to recognise it; and, moreover, two good reasons would act as barriers between her suspicion of him as being the author—the first, his not seeking her abode; the second, the borrowed name he had given the stationer.

The answer his messenger brought him was—"Miss Bateman should receive the letter without delay."

Rejoicing, Adair returned home, to meet a poor reward for his good deed, in Mariam's constrained manner.

CHAPTER XX.

THERE may be those who, reading this book, will feel a sympathetic warmth at heart with Kate when she received this letter. There may be those who have, at some time of their lives, bowed their heads in speechless gratitude before their Maker, awe-stricken at the hand, the Almighty hand, so near above their unworthy heads, showering down gifts of peace, watchful care, and love, possibly at the moment when they were, in their impatience, reviling His want of fatherly affection.

None but such can imagine what Kate felt—she was bowed in self-abasement to earth at her unworthiness, and unthankfully repining against Providence. How many excellent resolutions she made; but, alas! they were built on drifting sand. Not for an instant did she suspect Adair. Personal descriptions are like passports—they suit every body. Kate was told a tall, very dark, young man, had been in the inner shop on the occasion of her last visit, and on coming out admired the sketches. He might have been the sender, yet several had heard the tale of her father's position; so after all this, Captain Monmouth, for this was his name, might not be the person.

Kate took the trouble of going closely veiled to the address of Captain Monmouth, and watching his exit, to ascertain whether she had ever met him before. After patiently waiting a couple of hours, a cab drove up, a gentleman jumped out, tall, dark, and a perfect stranger to her; as the cab drove slowly towards the stable, she, once so timid, grown bolder in adversity, followed, and, beckoning the "tiger," placed a *douceur* in his hands, asking, "What is the name of the gentleman who has just entered 10 ——— street?"

"Captain Monmouth," was the reply.

And Kate turned away, uttering a blessing, which certainly did not light upon his head, though directed there, in her error. Her next step was to acknowledge the gift in the *Post*, and then with what a joyous heart, full of hope, she hurried to Mr. Gray's, to appoint a time for her father's operation.

How many good deeds we should do, which we now leave undone, could we fully comprehend the divine privilege awarded us, of descending like a sunbeam into the poor, darkened, desolate heart, lighting it up to joy and thankfulness!

Who might, seeing Kate as she entered Mr. Gray's, recognize in her the pale, sad girl of two days previously? her face was glowing, the eye flashing with hope and gratitude to Heaven and man.

"Mr. Gray," she uttered in the hurry of her joy, when ushered into his presence; "when will you see my poor father? I am so anxious to have the operation performed soon."

"See him!" answered the oculist in an abrupt manner, peculiar to himself; "where is the use of my seeing him? but if you wish me to do so, bring him here."

"Will you name your day, if you please?" she asked timidly, awed, despite the independence her hundred pound note gave her, by his manner.

"Tell him to come to-morrow at three," was the answer; "but you spoke of operation—you know my conditions."

"I have the forty pounds here," she cried, joyously, laying the note before him; "and oh! pray, sir, restore his sight soon."

Mr. Gray took up the note, looked scrutinizingly at it, then fixing his eyes upon her, said, "Where did you get this? You have not earned it, have you?"

Kate briefly related her story.

"Hum," muttered he, as she concluded, then added in a sharp hasty tone—

"A very good tale—very good; but it requires a sequel—there, my dear," and his voice grew rather husky, "put up your hundred pounds. I only wished to see if you really had energy to exert yourself; nothing like making the young labour, whatever their vocation. Besides, I knew you would require every farthing you could save to support your father before he would be quite recovered; nothing like energy—put up your hundred pounds."

"Oh, sir!" she cried, tears rolling down her cheeks, "I did not expect this from you: I—forgive me—accused you of being cold and grasping."

"So do many," was the abrupt answer; "but I work, and have laboured a long life to be what I am; and I choose others to do so, or we should be constantly imposed upon by those who *can* pay, and will not. If your father's eyes had been quite ripe for the operation, however, I should not have left it so long, but they are not."

"God is very, very good!" she exclaimed, looking upwards; "He never deserts us."

"Of course He does not: never forget Him, and He will remember you. Now, go, send your father to-morrow, and take care no one picks your pocket;" and turning his back with seeming indifference, this truly just, good man, rang the bell, and sent her hastily away, to spare her feelings.

With a light step Kate passed down the street, and finding herself in the vicinity of the Burlington Arcade, entered, to shelter herself from the rain, which was beginning to fall; many others, too, were hastening in for the same purpose.

There are days in our lives which seem marked by fate wherein to crowd events, as if it felt disinclined to scatter them broadcast over our path!

Kate walked through the arcade with a hasty step, and when she arrived at the Piccadilly end, stepped out, and raised her veil and head, to feel whether it still rained. At that moment a brougham stopped, and from it descended a gentleman; she was far too deeply engrossed with her very happy thoughts of the moment to notice any one, for prosperity to her was once again

to mix with the world, and see him who was all the world to her—Richard Adair, with what hopes she did not stay to inquire. Wrapped in this brown study, she looked upwards at the pouring clouds, but neither to right nor left.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed a man's voice beside her; "surely I am not mistaken, I have the happiness of again meeting Miss Bateman?"

Startled, she turned and faced Sir Philip Montgomery.

"Sir Philip!" she cried, blushing with surprise and annoyance, for her dress was the momentary thought, in its *more* than simplicity; "this is indeed a surprise."

"Not an unpleasant one, I hope," he said blandly. "I do assure you the pleasure to me is great; I have so often inquired of Bruce, whither one of our very brightest constellations had shot away."

"My father's health," she uttered, "required strict seclusion; we have been living away from the world, in which I have little inclination now to mingle." A sigh closed this speech.

"Does she love Adair?" was his mental thought, "and has prudence dictated this retirement? I," he continued aloud, "have frequently asked Adair about you, knowing your father had been his tutor, but he pleaded total ignorance of your locality."

As he spoke, he looked keenly at her, and, despite the self-command she endeavoured to call to her aid, the blood rose to the heated cheek, and betrayed her emotion.

"Mr. Adair," she replied, looking down, "has no inte-

rest now in seeking my father; his days of tutorship are passed, and"—she hastily added, raising her head with pride, fearful lest her words should imply a neglect of her on Adair's part—"my father's state, the absolute necessity for quiet, obliged me to keep our present address unknown to all!"

"Indeed!" he cried. "Then I may indeed esteem myself most fortunate in meeting you to-day; it is a lost pleiad found."

"But a poor, cold northern star, after all," she answered gaily, to conceal her embarrassment.

"Not cold enough, I hope, to forbid me the pleasure of accompanying her home, and there being introduced to Mr. Bateman!"

"Indeed, seriously, Sir Philip, we receive no visiters; pardon my necessary rudeness."

"I pardon all but the pain a positive refusal will inflict. Allow me to call, *not* as a visiter, but one anxious to amuse your suffering parent, if in my power. Believe me, illness and dulness are bad companions; one *thinks* of the grave, the other digs it—pray, allow me to remove pickaxe and spade?"

He thus urged, not from any very great desire to renew his acquaintance with Kate, but feeling that, through her, he might discover if really Mariam's heart were given to Adair, or whether her rejection of himself arose from mere girlish caprice; and there existed a hope, amidst this chaos of thought, which had Mariam for its centre.

Thoughts are certainly too often sympathetic. Kate was dreaming whether Sir Philip might not be a

channel through which she could discover the reality of Adair's position with regard to Miss Lincoln; a thing she most anxiously desired to be made acquainted with, before again meeting him. Both started from a reverie which had lasted only a few seconds, but was as an age in intensity. A few words explained why Kate was out this unpromising day, and, filled with the new-born desire of making Sir Philip subservient to her curiosity—and yet it deserves a higher name—she, as the rain was descending in torrents, accepted the use of his brougham; declining the scarcely more than implied offer of his company, but permitting him to call at their humble lodging. This, too, she resolved, in a bird's-eye view, aided by woman's wit in emergency, to improve, by removing to better rooms in the same house than those they then occupied. If we would trace all events in our lives to their source, how, amidst many devious windings, we should find the beautiful and perfect unity of thought which pre-ordained and directed them. But we cannot always be brought to acknowledge this whilst yet the water of the stream is running; we blame this, reprehend the other, and *dare* place our own petty judgment in opposition to the mind above us.

Adair was the machine employed to work out strange events—devious, crooked, and many of so doubtful an import, that we may, before the tale is told, pause and ask by the light of our straightened intellect, "Can this be for good?" But as in every work, mechanical or other, base and ignoble things are of necessity em-

ployed, the fair and foul blended, to shew that every thing has its use; so in life, sin and sorrow float down our stream, side by side with purity and peace, until arriving at the fall, one overwhelming, rushing cascade foams over the many rocks beneath, and from the noisy, angry, confused waters, the one whose unerring judgment guided all, raises to himself a pure spirit, predestined, created for his glory, whose white drapery, dripping from that stream, will become silvery robes of gossamer lightness, to waft it to heaven.

Let us then bear this in mind, and, amidst all which it may be our necessity as chroniclers of nature to write down here, see, that the evil tends to good, and for holy purposes.

Adair was an agent, and let us not condemn that which may emanate from his generous faults, till the tale be told, and then, weighing all fairly in the balance, own that without the dross, there could be no refined gold.

As Kate drove homewards, softly balanced on the luxurious cushions of Sir Philip's brougham, a dream floated through her brain; it was a momentary idea, for a veil quickly concealed it from her mind's eye—that veil was Adair—how marry another, loving him? —marry and lose him? No. And the vision melted away, and left only the questioning thought, "Why had Sir Philip been so courteous? Was it mere gallantry, pity, or another feeling? He had never been so attentive to her whenever they met at balls or elsewhere."

The brougham stopped, and away with it rolled all day-dreams when she entered her humble home, richer, it is true, by forty pounds than when she quitted that morning, but as far as ever from the loadstone of her heart—Adair.

The thoughts become so much more intense in darkness, that the once most thoughtless Bateman had become almost a calculating man; and when Kate, to whom the hundred pounds were as thousands, rushed towards him in breathless joy, to make him partaker of it, the querulous voice commenced reckoning time, the time they would have to live on it, the many expenses attending upon his operation, even though the act itself would be gratuitous, the possibility of his never recovering, and the time she must lose attending to him, until the poor girl burst into a passion of disenchanted tears, the more violent for the high hope they overwhelmed in her heart; nor was it till he heard the sorrow he could not see, that he too began to feel a hope, a regret for the grief he had caused her, and, above all, a deep gratitude towards Mr. Gray, for he was too worthy, however weak a man, not to be fully sensible of his obligation there. But all his words were unavailing to soothe her; the bitterness of calculating every casualty, remained, and the girl, looking round their small dingy room, sighed as she felt, in their circumstances, how more than imprudent it would be to increase their weekly expenses, by taking more expensive apartments merely to receive Sir Philip, who possibly might never call.

Disheartened, sick at heart, she sat next morning in a very plain cotton wrapper, neat, but evidently not with any attempt at coquetry, in the sad-looking room, her drawings before her; for she was hurrying to supply the place of the sketch Adair had purchased, and for that reason her father had accepted the offer of their landlord's son, as escort to Mr. Gray's, that she might work at home in quiet. Her eyes were red; she had been weeping, scarcely knowing why—it was the nervous reaction after the previous day's excitement. Not a day-dream or *couleur-de-rose* thought was in her heart—all was dingy as the rhubarb-coloured paper on the walls, when the sudden stopping of a carriage startled her. She had forgotten Sir Philip, and sprang to her feet; the impulse was to say, "Not at home," when she beheld him step from his brougham. Then she glanced at her dress, the room—all; and, colouring painfully, stood as if spellbound, incapable of any energetic act, and at that moment he entered. Had he found preparations to receive him, *toilette*, attempt at any thing which, from their known circumstances, he would have felt was unusual, the man of the world would have stood aloof, on his guard; but the perfect want of ceremony before him disarmed suspicion, and one glance at the red eyes, which looked sweet in their sadness, and the hair glossy and golden, but unsymmetrically arranged, spoke volumes of freedom from any thought of enslaving, and Sir Philip took the fair hand gently, and almost affectionately, in both of his, as he smiled on the blushing girl.

Some women look well *carelessly*, but not untidily dressed. Kate did. No laced sleeves concealed the white moulded arm, from which the mandarin one hung loose; one curl was behind the tiny ear, as Adair loved to see it, the other had fallen forward, and touched the bosom, heaving with emotion, she felt so much perplexed and agitated; and as he looked, he thought, even in the gay attire of a ball-room, she had never seemed so pretty in his eyes, and, involuntarily he felt, that assuredly Adair loved this girl, and for her sake slighted Mariam's affection, though circumstances prevented his marrying her. These instantaneous reflections were as certainties in his mind, and gave rise to a scarcely perfected thought, that he should like, in possessing her, to wound the man to the soul, who was master of Mariam's heart, and despised it.

Kate gave a hurried glance round the room, and there, on the hearth, were her father's slippers! Every thing bespoke their poverty, which draws so many incongruous things into the one common sitting-room; it seems the focus of misery, like starving children round scarcely lit embers. Sir Philip's glance followed hers, and he smiled, well pleased at this homely proof of the absence of manœuvring to catch him—him the rich bird, for which so many twigs were limed. And, drawing a chair near hers, he commenced with gentle, easy familiarity, conversing on indifferent subjects, to give her time to collect herself, and he also turned his back on the offending slippers, and shut them from her view.

CHAPTER XXI.

KATE was a girl of much energy in emergencies—much good, laudable pride, which forbids a heart's treason—to betray that, which the cold world ought not to be made acquainted with. From the few words on the subject, which dropped from Sir Philip's lips during the first quarter of an hour they sat together, she felt assured that for some motive, not quite clear to her mind (she did not possess enough vanity to suppose herself the cause), he was anxious to discover something relative to the state of Adair's feelings; and honest woman's pride said to her heart, "Lie still, nor betray me by one hurried beat." Schooled, she replied calmly to all he seemed desirous of knowing; and, whilst he deemed himself cleverly attaining his purpose through the ingenuousness of an unsuspecting girl, Kate was weighing every word he uttered, and, perfectly on her guard herself, came at last to this true and unhesitating conviction, that Sir Philip loved Mariam Lincoln, and the cruel fear followed in shivering garb, that Adair, too, bowed before her. Then came the question, "Whom does she love?—that cold, calculating girl!"

Cold and calculating she must have seemed in Kate's thought, to slight the love of such a being as Adair;

for Sir Philip's words implied as much, and that Miss Lincoln, incapable of real affection, was awaiting the possible chance, with her beauty, of a ducal coronet. How Kate at that moment hated her, so truly to be pitied, had she known all! Closing her heart on hope, where she had once hoped so much, a bitter feeling of uneasy research arose as to how she might best pain and triumph over her rival. This very sensation made her calm in outward seeming; for hatred and revenge check the warm blood's flow, like Winter's outstretched hands over a babbling stream, silencing its joyous sunlit prattling.

Her composure of manner puzzled her companion, who piqued himself upon much acuteness of observation, and he left, firmly convinced that whatever feeling had existed, or did exist towards her on Adair's part, she felt only that kindly, gentle one for him, which an affectionate heart might cherish for the one who had shared her childish hours of joy.

Before he quitted, he had so completely put Kate at ease with himself, that she laughingly called his attention to the ill-concealed slippers, and in a perfectly composed manner, pointed out with much humour all the poverty of her rhubarb-garnished apartment.

"I crept from my shell awhile at night," she said, "like a rambling moon-loving snail, to compare my circumscribed home with the splendour of the world of luxury, and now I have returned again, drawn in my horns, and am quite satisfied."

"And contented?" he asked; "surely you must feel

a desire sometimes to revisit scenes where you were so much prized, and now regretted."

"By whom?" she said, looking calmly in his face; and yet the bosom heaved with a hope that he might have heard a regret uttered by the only one, whose thought of her, could in any way pain or please.

"Need you inquire, Miss Bateman? take my extreme pleasure in meeting you once more, as the echo of every heart which has known you."

"An echo," she replied, laughing with perfect ease, "must be born of a sound; who ever expressed their deepest woe?"

"I did, Bruce did, young Adair did, in my hearing one evening to a friend; for you passed away from us after the last ball where we met, like a wreathed mist at morn, clad in white robes."

"You are quite poetical, Sir Philip," was the reply, "and have employed a poet's licence in your thoughts, for I was wreathed, as you express it, in pink *couleur-de-rose*, which I cast off from that day;" an almost imperceptible shade crossed her brow.

"She regrets some one," thought he, "but whom? it cannot be Adair; her manner of speaking of him is too composed."

"I thank your kind feeling for all you express," she continued; "for that spoke to you, perhaps, of a girl's sorrowing over scenes of pleasure and happiness. The two do not always meet; but Richard Adair, knowing all our circumstances so well, must have guessed and

approved the motive of my withdrawal, therefore his surprise astonishes me."

"Surely you would not have him indifferent to all your actions, Miss Bateman?"

"Dear me! no," she answered, looking full and smilingly in his face, "for we have known each other so well and long; he is ever associated in my mind with the latter days of childhood—those happy days when we loved so well those who have lived and learned with us; for learning then is a pleasure, we appreciate so much the honey which we are storing in our mind's cell, for a wintry day. I am most sincerely attached to Richard Adair."

"She cannot love him, and speak thus!" he thought.

"Oh Heavens!" whispered the woman's soul. "How utter so little, feel so much, and not suffocate with base hypocrisy!"

"Do you know Miss Lincoln?" was his immediate question.

The suddenness of it nearly startled the guarded girl into tremulousness, but compressing the lip imperceptibly for a moment, she replied with perfect composure, "By sight only. I have seen her frequently, but never was presented to her. I believe Miss Lincoln is engaged—is she not—to Richard Adair?"

She was not consummate actress enough to look up unmoved, as she uttered this; she leaned over her sketch, anxiously awaiting his reply.

The man's voice trembled so much, as he answered hastily, in ignorance of the fact, that Kate involuntarily raised her eyes, and fixed them on the cheek so flushed and excited before her; no one could mistake the emotion depicted there.

A very bitter, unworthy feeling arose in Kate's heart —one of mere jealousy of the girl who thus won all— for there was the internal conviction that Adair, even whilst he had wooed herself, was not quite indifferent to Mariam; and, for the first time, she resolved, if man might be won, to win Sir Philip. Many conflicting thoughts urged her to this. Mariam, she never for a moment imagined to be in love with Adair; for if so, why not marry him? Possibly she might be attached to Sir Philip, she had so often danced with him in Kate's presence; and, attributing to the supposed rival a petty feeling of which Mariam was incapable, she thought her possibly in love with Sir Philip, but withheld from marrying him by more ambitious hopes. That *he* was not indifferent to her, was certain by his present emotion; under any circumstance, it would be one detached from her car. What a base mother jealousy is, she gives birth to so many paltry ideas!

Kate cordially hated Mariam; and, had Sir Philip been a good reader of those acts emanating from a heart's resolve, he would have comprehended some vigorous resolution, taken on the part of the girl before him, who, pushing away the sketch her fingers had been so engaged with, exclaimed proudly, her whole bearing

changed, as she broke the silence of a moment, after his professed ignorance of Adair's engagement to Mariam—

"Pardon my teazing you, Sir Philip, about the affairs of a lady so perfectly a stranger to me as Miss Lincoln; but attribute it solely to the interest, *that in truth* of a sister, which I take in Richard Adair, I should like to know him well and worthily married."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, recovering the usual calmness of his manner, which had been momentarily ruffled by the thought of Mariam's engagement to another.

"Do you know, Miss Bateman, I once *almost* imagined (pardon my saying so much to you, nearly a stranger) that *more* than a boy and girl love existed between Adair and yourself."

Excessive pride had nerved Kate to all.

"Richard and myself!" she exclaimed, in well-feigned surprise, looking unblushingly in his face, and laughing, "I should as soon dream of whirling in a magic circle with Mr. Elton, and Cupid for our axis!"

Sir Philip smiled faintly; the girl no longer interested him; of marriage he had no thought now whatever. He had sought her, hoping through her medium to discover something of Mariam; her ignorance made her acquaintance valueless: and in this mood he took a cold leave, not, however, without soliciting permission to call again on his return from Brighton—whither, he said, he purposed going to-morrow. This, too, was an excuse to escape, in as gentlemanly a manner as possible, from the most necessity of renewing his visits. Thus they

parted, and to mere ordinary sight a fair bet might have been made, that they never would meet again unless accident favoured them; but there is more in the world than chance—there is fate.

Kate read the destruction of her half-formed hopes in his cold farewell; for the tongue may speak kindly, the hand press yours, but the eye is truth's delegate, and is alone to be trusted by those who can well read it.

She saw he did not care about calling again, and, woman-like, blamed her careless toilette, bad looks, *entourage* of rhubarb-papered walls, a bad frame for a fair picture, and, lastly, poor Bateman's slippers; consequently, when he returned, she was in no amiable mood, and wellnigh unkind to the poor blind man.

But Kate had a good heart, and, by the time their homely meal was over, she had regained her equanimity; dismissed for a while Sir Philip, and, her arms around her father's neck, anxiously inquired every word of hope Mr. Gray had spoken.

When, however, lone night came, and she lay in unquiet thought on a sleepless pillow, she asked herself, "How did I offend Sir Philip to-day? for in an instant his manner changed."

A little vanity answered the question; he was piqued by a suspicion of her affection for Adair.

This solaced her, for she felt, if he cared enough already about her to be jealous, he would return; the fit over, and comforted, she at last fell asleep—a wearying, feverish sleep; the opiates of which were

ambition, jealousy, revenge, and not one grain of affection for him she so ardently desired to attract.

It would seem Kate was a true prophetess; and yet, fate alone was the agent which directed Sir Philip's brougham to Brixton two days later.

When he quitted Kate the first time, with the indifferent tone of a man careless of all, he asked himself, "Where shall I dine?—at home? No, I am in no mood for my own dull society—At my club? yes."

So thither he drove, and dined with the last man he expected to find desultory, and bored like himself—Richard Adair.

We have seen that the latter was no stranger to Sir Philip's attachment to Mariam, and its strange result. A mixture of pity for the rejected man—who looked so wretched, and a *little* curiosity, induced Adair to hold out a hand and say—"Let us dine together, as we are both on club dinner bent; have you come for the turtle and venison of our bill of fare?"

"Not I; I did not know that such a *cuisine* awaited me when I came in; and you?"

"Not a bit of it; I dropped in for a quiet cutlet and sherry. I am sick of huge unmeaning dinners, where you must sit three hours, and poison yourself like a *rat de cave* from sheer spite, because they've caught you in a trap."

And so the two diamonds sat *vis-à-vis*, each trying to cut through his neighbour's window, and let in a little sunlight to illuminate his mental darkness on one all absorbing subject—Mariam.

CHAPTER XXII.

"POOR little black girl!" as Adair had called her, could she but have dreamed of the deep interest he took in her—she, so very lowly in her estimation of self; but thus it is, the humble are indeed as "streams flowing o'er golden mines," modest in their murmurings; the proud, as noisy billows, concealing, in their rush and foam, the rocks and weeds beneath. Could she have read Adair's heart, as Sir Philip strove by many tortuous ways through it to discover its secret thought, and how that heart hugged her image, however cold his hope of a requital. But false reasoning, which full often leads us into gross error, bade her despair; so she sat herself down, resolved to be miserable, and, drawing a veil before her eyes, lived in darkness.

Adair had by nature most buoyant spirits, now they were forced;—still, none but himself knew the counterfeit. He rattled on on all subjects; spoke of Mariam as "an eccentric girl—one whom he never would marry even if she loved him; one he thought incapable of great affection—a flirt" (which means a heartless girl of the world), to whirl in a waltz all night, and lay aside, like the faded myrtle sprig from your *boutonnière* before going to rest, lest her soul-speaking eyes should lighten be-

tween you and it, dancing, *ignis fatuus* like, to lead you onward to some quagmire.

"He is mistaken," thought the self-deemed sorcerer, Sir Philip; "she loves *him*, and he——"

Adair's next sentence solved the question.

"Talk of a girl now, all soul and feeling," he said, enthusiastically; "there was little Kate Bateman. I dearly loved that girl, and, hang it! I fear rather more than as a mere playmate; I wonder where she can be hiding! Have you ever, Sir Philip, in all your wanderings, seen her?"

Sir Philip said quite falsely and indifferently, "No," well assured the other was ignorant of her residence, and likely to continue so; and, in consequence of this conversation and its impression upon him, two days saw him once more driving to Kate's humble cottage, the triumphant thought spurring him on, that Adair would give much to know the address which he had half intended never again profiting by the knowledge of; and, if Mariam's love for Adair had made her to slight himself, he might possibly wring his, Adair's heart, by bearing off Kate's affection and herself. When we are too self-confident in our own powers of discernment, what grievous errors we commit! Thus he reasoned—thus he was led blindfolded to the feet of a girl who only made him a stepping-stone across a stream, where bright green fields beyond, wooed her wishes—those fields represented Richard Adair.

Sir Philip was much gratified at the reception he met with from Kate; and in the belief that she must

have known and rejected Adair's affection, else why this concealment of her residence from him? he felt deeply flattered by the pleasure which beamed in her eyes, and *now* evinced no alarm at any intended pitfall, to entrap him, as he noticed the evident care bestowed upon her own *toilette*, and the embellishment, as far as it might be embellished, of her dingy room.

One visit succeeded another. Sir Philip was not in the least in love, but there existed a certain charm in their meetings; the one, where a man believes himself to be an object of interest to a nice girl.

There was much, too, in Kate which pleased him. He was, though so young a man, one of the old school in propriety of thought as regards woman's conduct. She so firmly refused in any way to commit herself by the slightest imprudence of behaviour, that it enhanced any little favour of friendship doubly; not that he sought to lead her astray, but men do not always *grasp* at first sight any slight dereliction from strict correctness of conduct, as women do, until placed in evidence before them, and *then* they doubly admire the one who has avoided the scandal. Girls, too, like Kate, who may have once *nearly* forgotten all, become infinitely more guarded than the one who never could for an instant have nurtured a dream of error.

Sir Philip was passionately fond of horse exercise, especially with a fair companion. Vainly he implored Kate to accompany him; a decided "no" was her reply. Nothing daunted, he at last gained his point by presenting her to a married lady, a distant relative of his own,

living apart from the gay world of London, near Putney, and to whom he related Kate's sad history of toiling, for a blind father.

Nothing more was needed to enlist a good sterling English heart in the girl's favour, and, propriety satisfied, Kate was only too happy to canter round all the outskirts of town, with Sir Philip and his cousin for her companions; for the retiring taste of this lady made a ride in Rotten Row not to be dreamed of, we must acknowledge, to the other's annoyance; for, as one only thought guided her every wish, her suburban rides drew her not within the chance of meeting Adair.

Amidst her other and pleasurable occupations, let it not be supposed for an instant that she forgot her poor father, on whom the operation had been successfully performed, but who was still the tenant of a darkened room; and it was only to steal a few hours of fresh air and exercise, that his child consented to quit her watchful care of him. Neither did she neglect their means of existence; for hours in the day, the busy fingers plied the pencil in her sketchings. She was really a good girl, and the charitable must make some excuses for one, left so early to the sole care of a most unworldly and unguarded parent, who even now, saw no danger, asked no questions, about the almost daily visits of a man of fashion, like Sir Philip.

Strange as it may seem, this man had not, as yet, uttered one word of love—scarcely gallantry—to Kate. Insensibly they became intimate friends—she looked for his coming—hailed it without even a blush; and he sat

down as naturally on the little black horsehair sofa as if she were a sister. More than once he had been on the point of confiding all to her about Mariam, but something of shame withheld him. Still he loved to speak of her to Kate, and this without a suspicion or dread of inflicting pain, so brotherly was his intercourse with her; and both had a mutual thought, though of course directed towards different objects, in so much seeking one another. Sir Philip had an aim, which will be hereafter seen, in inducing her to accompany him on horseback; and her idea in consenting was, as we have said—all Adair.

Kate, it will be remembered, laboured under the impression that Adair was in ignorance of her present movements; and, consequently, as Sir Philip's visits and attentions, though so seemingly platonic, increased, an anxious, nervous feeling absorbed every thought—this was to see Adair again, and discover if really he were perfectly indifferent to her, in which case, should Sir Philip ever become a suitor, she assuredly would not refuse him, *not* from a mercenary motive, but a neglected woman's pride of heart. If in Adair's heart she should find one responsive beat with hers, away to the winds would she cast Sir Philip with all his wealth and title, and, let what might happen, live for Adair's love. For days this desire of meeting him marred all rest. How accomplish it? To write and solicit it would never do—he would come prepared—and then how judge his indifference or joy? It must be by Chance. She implored, and that busy dame heard her prayer.

It was again at the stationer's, whither she often went to carry her orders, and *he* frequently called to inquire (after some purchase made) about "that poor Miss Bateman," first assuring himself she was not in the inner shop.

One day—an unfortunate one for Kate's hopes—he looked in *en passant*, gave an order, and asked how Miss Bateman's poor blind father was progressing towards light. We say it was an unfortunate day for wilder hopes than mere friendship; for on it, Mariam (grown less cold towards him, and touched by the purchase by him of the horse she had coveted, though not giving him entire credit for the motive of that purchase) had given an almost cordial consent to mount it, and accept his escort. This was an immense step gained by him; for she had been so icy cold towards him and all of late, that he felt like an ethereal being, from whose wings the slough of some penitential sojourn on earth had been washed away by a dew from heaven.

In this mood, filled with thoughts of Mariam, in charity with all the world, even Angelina—whom he had escorted to the school door of the church, promising to take her on his arm to a charity sermon the following Sunday—of course to be preached by Narcissus; thus in charity with all, love for but one, he stepped into the shop—purchased stationery—inquired about Kate—stepped out again—and a dozen yards from the door met the girl herself. She shrank back, and grew pale and trembling; she dreaded him, and herself.

Adair uttered an exclamation, and then, grasping both

her hands, cried, whilst a bright, joyous glow lit up his face, "My darling Kate, how rejoiced I am to see you again, and looking so well!"

The words were very kind—none could surpass them in that feeling; but that alone they were. The glow on the cheek was friendship's—the clasp of the hands a brother's—there was no intonation which kept back the gushing words, and yet betrayed more than they could have expressed; there was no thrill, no lip whose quivering made the speech incoherent. *All* was said as felt, and the all, almost bade the tears of bitter disappointment roll down her cheeks. She had been incapable of more than—"Oh Richard!"—but how much those two words said of feeling.

"And are you still in the old place?" he inquired, drawing her hand beneath his arm.

"Oh, no!" she replied in surprise, partially recovering herself, "you know we left Highgate long ago."

"Yes, I know that of course, you naughty girl, for writing me so unkind a letter; but are you still at Brixton?"

A cold shudder crept over her: had he known her address, and never been?

"What do you know of Brixton, and our residence there, Richard?" she asked, looking up in almost agony in his face.

"This, dear," and he smiled gently down on the upturned face, "that you are living there, toiling for your poor blind father, who is, however, thank Heaven! in a fair way of recovering his sight."

"Come back," she cried abruptly, turning round. "I must call at Mr. ——," naming the stationer.

"Never mind now," was the embarrassed reply; "you can call another time about your sketches." He was betraying himself.

"Richard!" she exclaimed, while her voice shook with her internal suffering; "*you* sent me one hundred pounds—you represented yourself as Captain Monmouth!"

"Was it not a good joke?" he replied, laughing; "you can forgive me now, for it benefited your poor father, and I know your pride would not permit you to accept it from me."

"Why not?" she whispered, her voice was so weak and low.

"Oh, because, because—never mind, Kate—because you are a little goose!"

"And you have known my address for weeks, and never called!"

He looked confused, but candour conquered all embarrassment.

"Not weeks, dearest Katty. I did not, on my first visit to the stationer's, inquire it; I thought it better for both our sakes, we were led once into so foolishly childish a position."

"True," she responded in a cold, calm tone; "therefore you had better not call even now."

"Well, perhaps not yet. I should like a chat with you; I should like to see poor Bateman, too, so——"

"He is not permitted to see any one," she hurriedly

answered; "and I must leave you now, Richard, for I am in a great hurry to return to him."

He stopped. "Well then, dearest Katty, I shall call some day when I think he is visible, and recovered. Poor Bateman! and keep your heart and good looks, for I shall expect a joyous welcome to reward me for my self-denial in keeping away."

"Good bye," she uttered, scarcely able to speak.

"God bless you, Kate!"

A pressure of the hand, and one went to left, the other right. When would they meet again, and how?

CHAPTER XXIII.

On a fine sunny day in Rotten Row, and this is how it occurred.

Since the day of the last conversation we have detailed between Richard and Mariam, a mutual avoidance of one another had been the result; he, from a conviction that her affections were given elsewhere, ceased seeking her society,—what avails casting our wealth of love on a land where the seed has already been sown, the goodly wheat in ear? He was not yet sufficiently reconciled to the thought of losing her, to sink down into a mere brotherly quietude; and, until such could be, he sought oblivion amidst reckless and gay companions.

Though a state like this may beguile the heart awhile, and lure it into temporary indifference, it arouses from its slumber, strengthened in the real, disgusted with the false; and this awakening brought Adair once again to Mariam's side.

We will not speak of *her* feelings. She was struggling with a half-unconquered nature to learn calmness, charity, meekness, and forgiveness—difficult lessons where the young heart has to study them without support, or, far worse—hope.

Mrs. Adair, urged on by Angelina, who, with the acuteness of her acrid nature, had fathomed Mariam's heart sufficiently to read its distaste for the society of all those about her, who were aspirants for her hand, had commenced, to the poor object, a perfect persecution as regarded her settlement in life, as folks term it, which too frequently means a total subversion of our every comfort and tranquillity. Mariam asked only peace, and found herself hurried from scene to scene of so-called gaiety, wherein her weary heart took no part. Her disgust arose from so many causes: on the one hand, Adair's animadversions about her colour made every attention seem almost an insult; on the other part, Angelina took especial care to instil into her mind the thought that, "with her fortune," she might marry well. Poor girl! she would not have minded this, had not the other so much urged the case with her mother, that Mrs. Adair, as her guardian, insisted upon her seriously thinking of it. Moreover, Captain Lincoln, having had a great notion about the happiness of early marriages, made it an especial clause in the will, that Mariam should marry before she attained her seventeenth year; and with one only idea, and, to her imagination, a hopeless one, in her heart, she was forced to look upon the possibility of being urged, almost coerced, by the guardian of her father's insane choice, into some union perfectly distasteful to her. In truth, this worldly-called "happiest of creatures," with youth, beauty, and wealth at command, was a very wretched girl, full of worldly cares, which made her young heart grow old

with aching—old and worn, as if long years had passed over it.

In this mood Adair returned to her side, and with a kindness of manner, which almost made her forget all in her mind against him; he came, too, with an offer which spoke of a thought of her, which puzzled and almost surprised her again into that dream of affection, where two sip in unity and unchecked confidence from the same charmed chalice, charmed and sacred from worldly dregs of adulterated wine. It is so difficult to keep anger in our heart against its sole occupant; 'tis warring against nature, for nature is love; and what is life without affection! 'Tis simply existence without consciousness—a mesmeric sleep, dreamless and unnatural.

Adair came in smiling peace, and Mariam's heart borrowed light to cheer her darkness, from his smile; and when in the frank off-hand manner, peculiarly his own, he told her he was master now to offer her the horse her fancy had been set upon the possession of, she looked up in his bright unclouded hazel eye, and read so much gentle feeling towards herself, that it needed all the stubborn pride of a too susceptible nature, to darken her mind to the fact of his love.

Thus, hoping on his part, lulled almost to dreaming on hers, they started for a quiet country ride, to try the paces of the new acquisition to his stud; and having passed a couple of the happiest hours either had known for some time, yet, wherein no one word beyond mere friendship had been spoken, they by habit, more than choice, returned through Rotten Row, and cantering,

full of a new joy to both, we will leave them, and take a peep on this same day at Kate Bateman and Sir Philip, who were taking a quiet ride, also *tête-à-tête* for a wonder, and by one of those chances, thrown like rocks in our path, over which we too frequently stumble and break, or are broken, from our vain efforts to avoid them; and this is what is called predestination.

Sir Philip's cousin, when he called for her *chaperonage* on this day, was ill, indisposed, or cross, and quite unable to accompany them in their usual ride, so he, disappointed, turned off towards Brixton; nevertheless, with a faint hope that, when Kate should learn all, she might be tempted to infringe her previous resolution, and accompany him *sans chaperon.*

We are but mortal, whatever temptations assail us, and the taking a quite ride with Sir Philip was too simple an affair for her to take great precautionary safeguards against it. He urged, and she consented; for when he arrived, her hat was on her head, her whip in her hand, and his groom leading her horse before the door. To take off hat and habit, put on a quiet homely dress, and sit down to work, or, worse still, pass the lovely sun-brightened hours in her father's darkened room, where she had been patiently talking to amuse him all the morning, were things beyond Kate's very human powers, so she listened to Sir Philip's.

"What on earth *can* be the harm of a *tête-à-tête* ride with me? and not that either—my groom accompanies us; we have so often been seen with my quiet cousin,

en tiers, and just about our pleasant lanes; *do*, my dear Miss Bateman!"

And five minutes more saw Kate and her tempter in a social canter up the road.

But this was not Sir Philip's object and intention. He knew, for he had seen her there every day, that Mariam was almost certain to be in the park, either alone under her groom's care, or with Elton, who was a chosen cavalier of hers. Sir Philip's latent desire to urge her into some emotion, burst into life the moment he found his cousin would not accompany them.

All went merry as a marriage bell; for Kate could not possibly withstand the possible triumph, at whatever cost to her frame, of meeting Adair thus escorted. Both she and Sir Philip were more than gratified in their prayers; for in the first turn towards Kensington Gardens they met Mariam and Adair, and just as these two were within twenty yards of the others, after many a devious track through the tangled mazes of her susceptibility, Adair had won Mariam to promise that, on the morrow, she would take an early walk in the Zoological Gardens, and there, amidst the birds, beasts, and insects, permit him to dive into the recesses of her mind, and if possible discover *la mouche qui l'avait piquè* of late, into so much coldness and estrangement.

If—is there in the whole vocabulary of languages a word of more active cruelty than this?—we find ourselves on the point of attaining all we desire on earth, and two letters, and their signification, pass like a cloud between us and the sun of our hope.

If Mariam had not acceded to Adair's solicitation for "just one turn more," all might have been well—all cleared up; much pain spared to both—pain, and sin, and sorrow, perhaps. As it was, they took "one turn more," and just as her eyes, in velvet softness and half-subdued fire, were raised from her saddle-bow to his, bent down in earnestness upon her—even yet, whilst the full pouting lip uttered, "I will go to the gardens with you"—two equestrians met them, and she who had cast all thought of Kate to the winds, and every thing but the blind hope within her, saw Adair colour, start, and almost too much troubled to return the salute of the others, as he exclaimed—

"Merciful heavens! Kate and Sir Philip—alone together! What can it mean? Is she mad?"

How little short of absolute lunacy it is, to permit a hasty and biased judgment of others to act as a guide to our actions; and yet we always do, and too generally believe uncertain conjectures as firmly as if they were registered facts before our eyes!

Of the four meeting, not one judged truly of his or her neighbour's heart.

Mariam did not read in Adair's start and visible pain, the dread lest poverty had been too sore a trial to an almost sister to him, and Kate tottering on a brink of ruin.

Sir Philip's vanity (all have some) whispered, that the almost haggard look which in a moment shadowed over Mariam's face, was a lingering regret for her hasty conduct towards himself, arising probably from a spoilt

favourite's love of trifling with those who love us. We need not speak of what she really felt; the reader may look into her heart, which we have bared to view, and judge; but of all, but one felt elated with joy—this was Kate.

"So," she mentally said, "he can feel my being with another still; yet he trifles with and disdains my love! If woman's act may follow on the footsteps of her ardent will, Sir Philip's wife shall make his heart ache; yet I despise the man!"

And woman's will went hand in hand with the act which placed her trembling fingers in Sir Philip's palm before they reached home, as she uttered—

"I have nothing to refuse you, Sir Philip; your kindness to a poor girl will win you a loving wife."

For a moment she was sincere in the generous thought, then came the demon's prompting in her heart, that through him she might yet bend Adair.

Sorry reflection to commence the uphill journey of matrimony with, when we only place revenge or empty triumph at the summit; not a husband's heart to win.

Sir Philip married her in madness, for he could find no tangible or plausible reason. He felt it would wound Mariam and Adair; he thought so, was *almost* certain of it, but he scarcely cared. After all, what was it? He was rich; Mariam was nothing to him, never would be, yet she was exacting enough to feel annoyed at his attentions to another. Kate was pretty, and all said, What was it?—*only* matrimony.

And the thing was thus undertaken lightly and unadvisedly, long before the clergyman, in surplice white, should beseech them not to do so.

Could each have known the joy their marriage would give Adair and Mariam, how different would their feelings have been—how different their union, had it taken place! Now we must note facts.

Mariam found a reason, before reaching home, to decline Adair's escort to the Zoological next day, and he accepted it more resignedly than he otherwise would have done, had his good generous heart not been filled with fears for Kate, and projects how to save her, which must be at once undertaken. Full of this idea, he thoughtfully lifted Mariam from her horse; and scarcely saying adieu, hastened to his club, the Pandora box in which a man rummages full often without finding what he most requires in many of life's stages—a friend to counsel, a hope to serve him as lamp on a dark road.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ADAIR found pens, ink, and paper; and with these he indicted a letter, not "writ with bitter words," but in all affectionate anxiety, to Kate. This he laid on the table before himself, and then sat down to ponder on the most advisable manner of conveying it. "If I call," he thought, "there will be tears and protestations of good intentions; she will convince me against my own judgment whilst with her, and I shall leave her to laugh at me, and perhaps hurry down the downward path, where, it may be, she now pauses. No! I will write—letters are read—re-read—pondered upon—acted upon: I will write!"

So he sealed the missive, wherein he implored, as a loving brother, that she would for his sake pause; for the sake of that affection existing between them, so pure and perfect. But to this affection she would not have subscribed; feeling it far less sisterly than he could wish it to be, it ranked as an abortion in her sight.

However, it mattered little what he had written; even though in the letter he besought a meeting, not liking to intrude where he might possibly be *de trop* with Sir Philip, for Kate never received the letter!

There is no situation much more disagreeable and

trying to the patience, than to be at the tender and conscientious mercies of a maid of all work in a lodging-house!

The maid at Brixton in nowise varied from her species; she wore unlaced boots, in which she was always tripping herself up or down stairs. If a ring came to the garden gate, it might be the boy for the paper, or the butcher, or the milk; in short, she provided for all contingencies, by carrying half a dozen things to the door with her; thus, when the postman brought Adair's letter (Kate was out, or her quick ear might have heard the name asked for,) the girl took it in, and the milk at the same time, and, falling up the steps into the house, drenched the one in the other! What was to be done? dry it, yes; so before the fire she placed it, like a toast on the footman; a coal fell out, she was in the back kitchen; one corner was burned, and "Lauk!" she exclaimed, "I'm sure miss gets enough without this!"

Having no dream of all *one* letter may contain, more than hundreds might purchase, in the joy it brings, she cast it into the fire, and turned away, singing a rough imitation of "I have sent back ev'ry token," in perfect ignorance of Colonel Maberly's ubiquity of vision in all postage matters, which might some day bring to light the fate of this over-lit letter.

Adair waited, watched, hoped for some days; and, no reply arriving, even his kind heart grew selfishly indifferent.

"Why should I worry myself about one who cannot

appreciate my anxiety enough even to reply to it? so let her now act as she deems best."

Reader! we would, as far as our power enables us, extract a moral from every act we place before you, that at the termination a little bouquet of home truths may be gathered. See in this how coldly we follow up the interest of others; we commence all anxiety, a breath extinguishes the frail taper, and we leave them to plunge in darkness alone. We have done our duty, we imagine, in the one effort, but this may not perhaps be so reckoned to us; we should *persevere* in a good cause, and let our zeal be nothing daunted by another's personal blindness or ingratitude. Do not let us have, in self-accusation, to say after some evil has arisen—"*If* I had done so and so, all would have gone well."

Let us do all—leave nothing undone; *then*, if we fail, our conscience will have no "if" to fright us with.

Adair forgot all about Kate, Sir Philip, and every thing connected with them in a steeple-chase, but only for awhile, and during that while they were not *in statu quo.*

We will now look into Mrs. Adair's morning room of ladies' litter, and work, and—scandal, *cela va sans dire.*

Mariam—poor, dull, lonely, susceptible Mariam—sat there, working something, and bearing the allusions, questionings, and urgings of Mrs. Adair, Mrs. Bruce, and Angelina. Let not the world look coldly on this poor girl, as on one stupidly incapable of seeking or accepting her own happiness; but on one, the most cruelly afflicted of Heaven's creatures from a too keenly sensitive

mind, which turned all to dross from want of confidence in herself, or her power of inspiring affection. She had none to love—no, not one. Leah she dreaded now opening her heart to, since the woman's whispered murder. Mrs. Wilton was continually lecturing her about Sir Philip, and closing her heart there. Oh, how she had clung to Adair's affection! she would have been content with it even as a brother's; but to be nothing to him but an object of contempt, or an incomprehensible plaything; for she was still endeavouring to understand his motives of action towards herself.

"Well, Mariam," continued Mrs. Adair, taking up the thread of a previous discourse; "of course, I cannot *force* you to marry; but you are well aware of the nature of your father's will and wishes, and these latter should, at all events, act as stimulants to a dutiful daughter."

Mariam was silent, but she sighed.

"I declare, mamma," sneered Angelina, "you treat the case quite medicinally; one would fancy you were prescribing a blister."

"Ha, ha, ha!" gently laughed Mrs. Bruce; "you are not far from the truth in your expression. Miss Adair's marriage *certainly* is an irritant, how far beneficial, *I* am not competent to judge."

She quite forgot that her call that morning had been premeditated between herself and Mrs. Adair, to talk Mariam into matrimony. Women have positively a little saltpetre and gunpowder in them; they must all turn to match-making, and then too, unfortunately, they are

appreciate my anxiety enough even to reply to it? so let her now act as she deems best."

Reader! we would, as far as our power enables us, extract a moral from every act we place before you, that at the termination a little bouquet of home truths may be gathered. See in this how coldly we follow up the interest of others; we commence all anxiety, a breath extinguishes the frail taper, and we leave them to plunge in darkness alone. We have done our duty, we imagine, in the one effort, but this may not perhaps be so reckoned to us; we should *persevere* in a good cause, and let our zeal be nothing daunted by another's personal blindness or ingratitude. Do not let us have, in self-accusation, to say after some evil has arisen—"*If* I had done so and so, all would have gone well."

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not competent to judge."

She quite forgot that

premeditated between

to matrimony

gunpowder

quite as prone to lend their aid in breaking what they took so much trouble in combining.

"Really," answered Mrs. Adair, nodding her head affirmatively, and with conviction, "you are quite right, my dear friend; for how few marriages are truly happy?"

Mariam's presence and case were in an instant forgotten, in the love of pursuing a favourite theme—the tyranny of husbands.

"Few?—none!" responded Mrs. Bruce. "Now, there's Bruce; he passes in the world for a model husband, and, I am sure, a greater wretch in many things never existed!"

"I was certainly fortunate," sighed Mrs. Adair; "for though so great a disparity existed between us, and far more, though Adair was *not* the man my young heart chose, a better husband never existed; he was one never to be replaced."

Mrs. Bruce looked up, amazed for a moment, having so often heard him very differently spoken of; and then, knowing well her dear friend's character, set it down to the caprice of the instant; but this it was not, but pure vanity, which prevented her acknowledging calmly, reflectingly, that any one could do other than love her, and be her slave. Angelina and Mariam, as if by mutual consent, kept perfectly still and silent.

"Ah, well!" said Mrs. Bruce, "you were a favoured mortal; for, of all my acquaintances, I know not one who would not rejoice in her freedom to-morrow, and certainly I think divorces are most unfairly granted

only on certain grounds. *I* would make bad temper, and unreasonable exactingness, all-sufficient grounds!"

A smile flitted over Mariam's sad face.

"Adair had a sweet temper!" fell from his loving relict; "and a less exacting, more indulgent, man never existed!"

"It is a pity the worms have him!" answered Mrs. Bruce, with asperity; "they must feel compunction in picking the bones of so excellent a man! But," she added, changing her tone, "they will have a change of diet when Bruce dies!"

"And he appears so kind, though a little rough; for instance, how warmly he took poor Bateman's daughter by the hand!"

"Ahem!" nodded the loving wife; "Miss Bateman was a pretty girl, and, I believe, a very artful, forward one; *perhaps*, had I deemed it worth my while, I might have found all-sufficient cause for a legal divorce, had I pleased!"

Mariam's face lit up. She had no cause to like Kate; but the generous heart revolted against this onset against a poor absent girl's fame. The lips parted to speak; but a low, sneering laugh from Angelina made her feel, how thrown away all fine sentiment would be amidst so much ungenerous judgment.

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Mrs. Adair, resting from her netting to devour a tale of scandal. "Ah! my dear friend, I can sympathize with you, for something of a similar case occurred to myself!"

Mrs. Bruce's face lit up with a cunning, gratified

smile, as she peeped at the other under her brows; she saw the moment approaching in which Adair's memory would lick the dust.

"Indeed!" was all she uttered.

"Yes, indeed—and indeed!" and she "closed in," in military parlance, nearer her friend, for the fight. "But," she added, "I was firm, and soon gave the lady her dismissal; she was daughter, he *said*, of an old friend."

"The old tale!" tittered Mrs. Bruce; "I have heard twenty such from friends of mine; poor, injured creatures!"

"It was the first serious quarrel Adair and I ever had. This occurred about six months after our marriage; and I may truly aver that we never had a happy day afterwards—nothing but suspicious bickerings and quarrellings!"

We leave the reader to guess the surprise depicted on every face by this *naïve* confession after her previous conversation.

"It is not that men are brutally cruel," responded Mrs. Bruce; "they are far too cunning for that. They have a way of insinuating their tyrannous resolutions, so that a bystander would think them all kindness and affection."

"Exactly what Adair used to do!"

"Now, Bruce, if I wish to go out early, invariably says, 'I wish, my dear, you would defer it an hour later, I want to have a little quiet chat with you,' and that chat *always* terminates disagreeably; or, if *I* wish to stay at home, *he* begs me to accompany him some-

where, and, long before we arrive, *he* goes one way in high dudgeon, and *I* another!"

"I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, "I do believe all men are made in the same mould! That was exactly like Adair—he was the most perverse creature, when he pleased, that ever existed!"

"Ah! well, my dear Mrs. Adair, you have your hour of consolation, at last!—I mean," she hastily added, feeling the indelicacy of the broad rejoicing over the dead, "in the affection of your dear children."

No one replied, save a low ahem from Angelina, who was unusually silent.

"Certainly, all who marry have their bitter trials," sighed Mrs. Adair; "and the worst part is, no one pities or appreciates our sufferings. Now, every one thought me the happiest of women, Adair a model; and I am sure no woman ever had more to contend with from the often, almost brutal temper of a husband!" Having delivered herself of this final opinion, she crossed her hands over her placid bosom, and looked a victim.

"Nay, I must lay full rightful claim to a wife's suffering!" exclaimed her dear friend. "For, assuredly, if your husband was brutal sometimes, I grieve to say, mine is nothing short of his disposition now, and at all times; but, if it is a consolation, I am one amidst thousands as miserable!" There was a pause.

"And now, Mariam," said Mrs. Adair, turning towards her, and totally changing her tone, "I trust you will attend to those truly anxious for your welfare,

and make the selection for your future happiness we are desirous of seeing you make. I mean——"

Before she could conclude the sentence, though little prone to laughter, Mariam burst into the most joyous peal she had ever uttered—the childish voice rang in glee, and strange sympathy, Angelina followed the example, though in a tone of mockery and derision.

"Upon my word, young ladies!" cried Mrs. Adair, colouring indignantly, "your hilarity, to say the least of it, is misplaced; if you cannot respect me, pray consider we are not alone!"

"Forgive me, dear madam!" said Mariam, still almost bursting forth in the reprehended laughter; "but can you, in conscience, ask me to choose matrimony when all men are brutes and wretches? *If* I find one not such, I will marry—till then, if I forfeit all my dear father left me, I will remain Mariam Lincoln; and respecting the name the more, that I believe he was a good loving husband, as he proved a dear father to me!" Our laughter and tears are extremes often touching. Mariam sobbed tearlessly and hysterically, as she recollected that dear and regretted parent.

"For my part, madam," said Angelina, in a severe tone, the most just she had ever used, "if I glory in being my father's child, I blush that you should have consented to become my parent in common with a man you so much despised!"

"This comes of my anxiety about that ungrateful girl," whimpered Mrs. Adair, whilst Mrs. Bruce sat

silent and amazed, like some suddenly entrapped animal. "This comes of my anxiety that she should marry Sir Philip Montgomery; she never will have such another offer. He has——"

Before she could tell up his wealth, as she had been about doing, the door hastily opened, and Adair entered, his face beaming with a not-to-be-mistaken pleasure.

"Who do you think was married this morning at St. George's?" he asked, at the same time taking Mrs. Bruce's proffered hand, and uttering a *sotta voce* "How d'ye do?" whilst awaiting the result of the guessing.

A dozen wrong persons were supposed the happy couple.

"Sir Philip Montgomery and Kate—little Kate Bateman! By Jove, a million could not rejoice me so much!" A cry from Mariam arrested his speech—he stood transfixed, gazing upon her, and a heavy shade passed over his fine joyous countenance.

When we call in the aid of art to assist or conceal nature, how, almost invariably, we destroy its purity! Cultivation may double the leaves of the violet, but it destroys the perfume. Go to the woods, and listen to the plaintive cry of the bird whose nest has been robbed, or the bleating of the mountain goat bereaved of her kid, and who for a moment will mistake either for a joyous tone?

Mariam endeavoured to subdue the wild happiness this communication of Adair's brought to her bosom, and not one in that room but imagined her convulsed with grief. She had started up erect, as by an effort of

electricity, and now stood trembling with downcast eyes, feeling that all were regarding her, dreaming that all read her feelings as they truly existed, in their rejoicing that Sir Philip Montgomery's wife could now be nothing to Richard Adair.

Angelina's words awoke her to the reality of the general impression.

"You certainly have deserved this severe blow, Miss Lincoln," she sneered; "for though you have a fortune, Sir Philip was too rich to make yours an object to him; and, under *all* circumstances, I should imagine you scarcely expect to meet with another offer to equal this; most men *might* have prejudices in favour of English girls."

The look accompanying this, conveyed the full meaning of her words, to the poor susceptible Indian.

Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Adair were loud in their exclamations against the depth of cunning Kate must have possessed, to draw Sir Philip into the match; they were neither of them women to comprehend that, if Kate really loved him, a girl's pure warm affection might make an emperor proud to win her, and they had no right to suppose any, but a good feeling in her choice.

Adair did not utter one word, Mariam's emotion had turned his joy to bitterness; he read her by the world's false light, and not that of nature's glorious sun of brightness and truth. She did not speak for some moments, and then any unprejudiced or unjealous mind would have correctly interpreted the subdued tone of a

joy, fearful of expressing too vividly its overflowing happiness, as she said—

"I am truly, sincerely glad, to hear of Miss Bateman's good fortune, though she is a personal stranger to me."

And, taking up her work, she resumed her seat, and the thick eyelashes concealed the hope sparkling beneath them.

CHAPTER XXV.

ADAIR spoke little more; there was a heavy weight at his heart—a last hope crushed into leaden dulness. He felt now convinced that Mariam had no affection for himself; he began to doubt her capability of loving any one, for, knowing she had refused Sir Philip, he could only suppose her a cold, heartless flirt. Angelina sat morose and more livid-coloured than usual. Any girl's marriage was painful to her; but how much more so, must be the singular good fortune of one, she had ever treated contemptuously? Mrs. Bruce was all anxiety to know full particulars, and Mrs. Adair, pin-money. To few of their questions could, or would Adair reply; merely saying he had seen the wedding equipages *en passant*, and inquiring, was told to whom they belonged. Mariam's fancied coldness made him turn to all thoughts and memories less than pleasant, and with bitterness of spirit he remembered Kate's cold contemptuous silence regarding his letter, and, the first inquiries answered, he quitted the room in a desolation of heart never felt before; he appeared to have lost two in one day, whom he loved.

After his departure there arose a debate about the necessity of calling upon Lady Montgomery. Mariam

felt her troubles not yet ended; she was not girl of the world enough to meet a man to day with perfect indifference, whom she had jilted yesterday; for, turn the facts as she would in her own mind, nothing but a cold and heartless act of deception towards Sir Philip could she make of it, in her self-accusation; and to make the matter more painful, by some means Mrs. Adair had become acquainted with the fact of her acceptance and rejection of him.

"I dare say, Mariam," said Mrs. Adair, "that you feel a certain soreness in meeting Sir Philip; but you have brought it all on yourself, by the, I am sorry to say it, overweening opinion you have of your own attractions. Men are *not* mice; and, depend upon it, secure as you may often think yourself in your power of recatching them at will, there will too frequently be a snug little corner, in which they will elude your vigilance."

"You indeed mistake me, madam," she answered in a subdued tone, "and I fear all efforts of mine will prove vain in ever teaching you to know me. I again assure you, I *never* should have married Sir Philip."

"Well, 'tis easy to say so now," sneered Angelina, and, since that is the case, perhaps you will permit my mother to call upon Lady Montgomery, as we are likely to meet her continually in our set;" she continued, addressing her mother, "I do not see how you can well avoid it, though it may be somewhat degrading, to visit a mere tutor's daughter—your once paid servant;

but these low girls certainly have a talent for creeping in every where."

"Mrs. Bruce, you say nothing!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, turning to the unusually silent lady.

"Ah! my dear friend," was the preface, with a lugubrious shake of the head, "you know not *half* my sorrows when I contemplate this most sudden and extraordinary marriage. With my painful experience of matrimony, and deep study of all its phases, I can confidently assert my belief, that not one union takes place, without entailing the misery of dozens. Directly and indirectly, it draws all approaching it into its vortex of woes or annoyances; 'tis a bomb bursting among a crowd, dozens are wounded by it!" Having thus delivered her overcharged heart, she sighed deeply.

"What *can* possibly affect you, dear Mrs. Bruce, in this one?" inquired Mrs. Adair.

"Do you not see it all?" exclaimed the other, breaking into a whine, shrilly and keen. "It has been brought about by my wretch of a husband, and for some vile object of his own. Poor blind Sir Philip! poor unhappy me! would to Heaven *you* had married him, Miss Lincoln," and she turned towards Mariam; "we might all have been at peace then!"

"Pardon me, Mrs. Bruce," answered Mariam, smiling; "but I fear I should never have been able to turn aside, by any influence of mine, the dangers to so many, of this bomb matrimonial."

Before any one else could speak, the door opened, and a servant ushered in Mr. Narcissus Browne.

"What is this I hear about matrimony?" he asked having caught the last word, after first saluting the ladies, and quietly taking a proffered seat beside Angelina on the sofa. Three together were not too many to tell the wonderful news; Angelina, in his presence, spoke with a holy respect for marriage, totally at variance with her manner generally. Indeed her whole tone was changed, she was modelled on her name when Narcissus was by.

Mariam watched her opportunity to glide away, whereupon Angelina commenced, in a kind, plaintive tone, before Narcissus, pitying poor dear Mariam for what she must feel at Sir Philip's marriage, as she had been evidently attached to him, and, from a foolish love of shewing her power, induced to trifle with him, and thus mar what might otherwise *perhaps* have been a match. The other ladies were indifferent about correcting the *perhaps*, by the assurance that only Mariam herself had avoided it; thus Narcissus was led to suppose her the jilted.

The two elder ladies soon made an excuse to creep into the smaller room, and converse apart in melancholy forebodings over the event of the day; whilst Angelina undertook the most difficult task, of quietly bringing a man within the pale of matrimony, who was obstinately resolved to remain without, nor, like a thoroughbred hunter, leap his five-barred gate to get in.

It is a dreadful case when men cannot be made to

understand that you would like to marry them, and that they are expected to propose; it evinces a terrible darkness of intellect!

Not all Angelina could insinuate made the slightest impression; nothing could ever make her other in his eyes, than a capital good fellow in a clerical sense, wanting only the impossible canonicals, to be his helpmate in all things. However *this* she made him understand, that *he* ought to marry; and as he had given, almost insensibly, the reins into her hands in all mundane matters concerning himself, from a real distaste to worldly troubles, he, with something of a sigh, replied that most probably she was quite right. "But," he added, "I am forced to admit that marriage is often a rugged path, from which we are not in any way exempt, more than others; I never thought of venturing upon it in my own individual case; I had some unusual notion floating through my brain, that, as a clergyman, I might have made my home among my parishioners, without burthening my mind with the care of one of my own."

Here poor Narcissus sighed over the prospect before him, of loss of peace.

To comprehend all Angelina's ardent desire to urge him to her bent, our readers must be told that, some short time previously, she had received a letter from her once dear inseparable friend, Miss Caffir, who had departed for a visit to some country friends. Miss Caffir was one of those very shrewd persons who sometimes outwit themselves. When Mariam arrived, it

seemed prudent in her sight to creep into the good graces of the heiress, even at the expense of Angelina's favour; "but the poor simple fool," as she termed Mariam, kindled in no wise at her advances, and she was losing ground in consequence of this double game with the other; so she wisely resolved to try the effect of absence. Shortly after her departure, Angelina received a letter, containing the astounding intelligence that Miss Caffir had met with the poet's "honest gander" who had chosen this "grey goose;" in short, she was going to be married! Of all seemingly impossible things this was one. Now, though the man who would marry her could never expect to aspire to her friend, still even a proposal, was more than Angelina had ever met with; no one had popped the question, even by look, to her, for assuredly, if they had, she would have accepted.

This marriage raised a storm; Kate's exalted it to a hurricane, and she was resolved, if it might be, to hunt the poor curate into wedlock; once decide him to the step, and what other could he think of but herself? Who may dive into the dreams of wayward fancy, even the more sedate ones of this placid son of the church? Angelina resumed—

"My dear Mr. Browne, it may seem strange that I, a girl, should presume to offer you advice; but your kindness and—may I not say friendship?—embolden me to be more than at ease with you. I speak as—a sister;" she added after a pause, as if seeking a word, and only making a shift with this *faute de mieux*.

Narcissus, however, noticed nothing; he was deep in

his meditations. Shadow after shadow crossed his pensive brow, and then came a little gleam of light, and then something very like a ray of sunshine shot forth as he said, "Well, perhaps it would be better I should marry: it will give me a position I do not hold, and which, as a clergyman, I should possess; but then the question is——"

"About the lady?" she quickly inquired.

"Just so, where I might choose I might not be chosen; and, I know my own disposition so well, I never could go wife-seeking."

"Have you thought of any one?" she anxiously inquired, peeping at him sideways.

"Not exactly, but—you have set me thinking, and you know how daring imagination is, unless we put a rein upon it; I might ask some one and be refused."

"Then you *have* some person in your thoughts? Ah! Mr. Browne, how shy you are!" and she playfully —an immense effort for her—touched his arm.

"You are a kind good creature, my dear Miss Adair," he said almost affectionately, for he really liked her; "and if any one could encourage a man in an uphill task, you would, for matrimony is such to me, never having dreamed of it, and feeling a confirmed bachelor in my habits."

"Marriage, my dear friend and brother, is a pure and holy tie, when two of well-assorted minds meet—two who have well known and respected each other before entering upon it. Oh!" and she strove to look wildly enthusiastic, "I can conceive no holier bond on earth!"

Narcissus looked at her, smiling in perfect innocence of heart. "You do indeed encourage me, but yet it requires more reflection, for the sake of our mutual happiness; I mean," he said, stammering over the self-correction, "mine, and the lady's. Ah! that is the difficult path, the one I should choose—will she?"

He looked at her as if she knew on whom his thoughts were fixed, and certainly could decide the question.

"Try her," was the reply; "try her, nothing doubting, and you will succeed, rest assured; for she must appreciate your worth, or be a worthless girl—one little to regret."

"Then you have almost decided me, my dear Miss Adair, and to you I shall owe all my happiness, if I become an accepted suitor. Without these kind words from you, how should I have dared to hope?"

An importunate entrance from the two in the next room stopped all further conversation, and to Narcissus's previous uncertainty and timidity seemed to succeed a kind of excitement. Before he left the house, he appeared like a man prepared to rush headlong into something not well known to himself—a quagmire, out of which he never might extricate his steps. In this mood he quitted the house, after first affectionately pressing Angelina's hand with a significance not to be mistaken, she imagined.

When a person has been hurried into a thought, perfectly new to their mind, full often it grows with amazing velocity into an ardent desire. 'Tis an arbour

covered with sweet and odorous plants, in which we seat ourselves delighted, nor see any thing but fair and wreathing blossoms, and the verdure around and above us, sprung up in an hour by fairy wand, until some vile, hideous insect drops down upon us, to recall us to the reality of our position, and the impossibility of all perfection in this land of our exile.

Narcissus Browne quitted Eaton Square with a thoughtful air, and no wonder; he was composing a letter, a love-letter too, as he walked on. To doubt and gravity, succeeded hope and day-dreaming certainties, castle-building, and the many pleasant things he would do for philanthropy's sake (for he was a very well-intentioned man) if his suit prospered; things, which now as a poor curate he could not accomplish. But there was a wretched "if" in the case; then how could he succeed?

His housekeeper was perfectly amazed at the unusual brightness on poor Narcissus's face, and still more when he sat down to write for a whole hour—he the most literal and least literary man in the world—forbidding any interruption till he rang his bell.

There we will leave him, and return to Eaton Square, two hours later, and look in upon Angelina, sitting in meditation, but not "fancy free," for a host of soft thoughts were playing round her heart, decked in Brussels lace and orange flowers.

Thus she reclined, her eyes half-closed, as the door opened, and Mariam with hasty step entered. The generally pale olive of her complexion was tinged with

one deep crimson spot; as she advanced, the eyes shot the fire of offended pride, and the pouting lip quivered with the heaving of the swelling heart.

"Miss Adair," she uttered, with vainly suppressed emotion, as she held towards the other an open letter, "when it shall please you for the future to amuse your leisure with practical jests, may I request that I may be exempt from bearing them!"

Angelina could not reply, her amazement deprived her of speech—*she* the authoress of practical jests!

"It may seem pleasant to you," continued Mariam, bitterly, "to expend your sarcasm upon me yourself; but permit me to say, that when the insults are continued from without this house, I, girl as I am, will appeal against it, where my voice may be heard, and justice succeed to tyranny. May I request you to be obliging enough to give this pleasant insolence to its writer, Mr. Narcissus Browne. If his sermons equal his uncanonical productions, I have indeed to reprehend my own want of talent and perspicacity which would prevent my appreciating them!"

She turned to quit the room, after laying an open letter on the table beside Angelina.

"Miss Lincoln," cried the other, surprised almost beyond power of utterance, "am I to understand that——"

"That," answered Mariam, turning round in now subdued anger, but with *hauteur*, "I positively decline the offer of consolation proposed for my acceptance by Mr. Narcissus Browne. Pray read his letter, if as yet

unread." And she quitted the room, now pale as ashes, and, in closing the door, sobbed in that convulsed and overwhelming emotion, which makes the heart grow so worn and old.

Her hand was on the lock, when another clasped, and drew it towards him; she started in terror, to find the possessor of it only Elton.

"What is all this?" he kindly said, still holding her his prisoner. "I see, by your quivering lips, that you are angry, and I heard your voice in tones unusual to you *of late*, since you have so resolutely undertaken that most difficult task—self-subjection. Come, tell me what it is, here—down in the little breakfast parlour—no one will interrupt us—I have much to say to you."

"I cannot now, Mr. Elton. Oh! pray let me return to my room, and be alone in peace awhile."

"Peace! Do you call it peace with that angry quivering of the lip? Come, come, I am an old man; don't fear me—let me advise—you need it."

"I know I do—I know I do!" she almost sobbed, as he led her down-stairs; "but I have no one to direct or love me—not one!"

"Not one?" he replied, as he seated himself beside her, "and Mrs. Wilton?"

"Oh! she is indignant with me about Sir Philip, and—something else" (she did not say her fears about Adair.) "We seldom meet."

"'Tis a pity; she is a good woman." This from him was immense praise—he had not too frequently honey on his lip. "A great pity," he continued; "for you

need guidance;—you see I am no flatterer. What have you and Angelina been quarrelling about?"

"Do not say quarrelling!" she hastily cried. "I would not condescend to quarrel with any one."

"Indeed! then what are angry words? But let us not dispute about trifles; it was only your hot Indian blood in ebullition!"

"That's it!" she cried, in an agonized tone. "Always that reproach!—Indian blood, Indian temper, Indian tint. Oh, poor Indian, indeed!—rooted from her warm soil to perish on this cold dry earth!"

"Whew!" he whistled, looking steadily at her, and then he sat silent and thoughtful some moments, contemplating her. "So the wind sits in that quarter, does it? I am glad I have found out the cause of these tornadoes and hurricanes; they have puzzled me. Has Richard," he asked, after another pause, "ever spoken to you of your Indian blood, Mariam?"

"You well know he has, Mr. Elton," and her lip trembled over the avowal. "And to you—to me—to all!—'tis a pleasant reproach, ever in his mouth."

"To me, you say!" he answered thoughtfully. "How do you know that?"

"I heard him."

"Then you listened? This was wrong, Mariam—unworthy of you—you paid the penalty, however; you remember the old adage."

"I did not mean to listen, as Heaven hears me!" she energetically cried; "but I could not pass the open door, and the words reached me."

"I remember. I am now dawning like a grey misty morning into daylight. You are my Aurora with your revelations—let us change this subject. What were you saying to Angelina?"

Mariam related the contents of Narcissus Browne's letter; and we, therefore, without indiscretion, may peep over Angelina's shoulder and read it aloud, as she indignantly did so to herself, bursting with envious hate. Thus it ran, or stumbled, for it was a very lame affair:—

"DEAR MISS LINCOLN—After due consideration about many things, I have come to a determination, theologically and philanthropically speaking, of addressing myself to you. As regards the first motive, it is with this view: It having been pointed out to me, by my dear and much respected friend, Miss Adair, that, as a clergyman, I ought to marry, I have, I must confess, rather unwillingly determined upon changing my present state as soon as possible; and I certainly think, all things properly weighed, that a wife is almost a requisite appendage to a minister in his various duties, as comforter to the poor and sick, and a helpmate for himself, directing his steps by her good judgment, and in her leisure moments, like a second Dorcas, making clothing for the naked. Philanthropically speaking now: I have been more induced to turn my thoughts towards you, to-day, than to another, because you are in trouble, and it is our duty to bear one another's burdens; and though your present one, is of a nature to alarm some persons, I feel none such, resting perfectly convinced that, hav-

ing passed months under the truly religious care and affectionate keeping of dear Miss Adair, you cannot but be possessed of those high principles, which will at once make you struggle with and conquer your affection for a new-married man, Sir Philip Montgomery. With this perfect understanding of one another, I feel assured our union will be one of as much felicity as any reasonable persons could expect; and that, like Abraham and Sarah, we shall live together, if it please Heaven, to a good round age, and length of days. Awaiting your reply, believe me, dear Miss Lincoln, very truly yours,

"NARCISSUS BROWNE."

Angelina read this letter, and crushing it in her hand, went into a fit. Elton listened to every word, almost literally remembered by the indignant Mariam, who thought it a *mauvaise plaisanterie* to annoy her; and when she concluded with the "round age," and "length of days," he shrieked with laughter, which almost provoked Mariam to mirth, for indignation was thrown away on so strangely absurd a letter; yet Narcissus, all unused to love-letter writing, meant well and sincerely in all he said.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"WHY did you reject Sir Philip, Mariam?" asked Elton; "he was a good match, an agreeable young man."

"But I never could have loved him," was her interrupting reply; "and, unless I can love, I never will marry."

"But you know it is your father's express desire you should do so, and before your seventeenth year—time soon flies."

"Not with me—it has leaden wings."

"Then you are in affliction of spirit—poor child! Tell me, Mariam, for you are in outward seeming so cold and reserved a girl, why are you speaking so freely to me, almost a stranger, and one generally feared and shunned?"

"Because I like you, Mr. Elton," she replied, looking up with her deep, powerful eyes in his face. "I feared you at first; I like, and feel confidence in you now." There was all Mariam's candid, dauntless character in these few words, and their accompanying look.

"Well, that's something gained, something unusual," he said, smiling; "I generally am hated."

"By those who look to mere words. I did at first,

and disliked you; now, I respect and prize your good opinion."

He was silent some moments.

"Let us talk of matrimony," he said, at length.

"Oh, why? I hate the subject; it has been held up to me as some bitter draught I must swallow."

"Well, so it is often," he sarcastically answered; "but take it disguised *en capsule*, and let that casing of gum be represented by—let us say respect, if not affection;" for an instant he paused, and looked furtively at her downcast face. "I mean," he added, "why not marry Richard? If you don't love him now, you would learn to do so, believe me. I know all his merits and demerits; he is a wild fellow, but the heart is good. You will tame him."

"I would sooner marry even Mr. Browne than Richard Adair!" she impetuously cried; "*he* would respect me, and I might learn to be satisfied with that."

"So would Richard, I will answer for it; for what he said about 'Indian blood' meant nothing."

"I could not marry him on these terms—I mean—I mean——"

"That his respect would not satisfy you; perhaps you have rightly judged. I have discovered what I wished to ascertain," he mentally said; "she loves him. I don't know what we are to do," he continued, addressing her, "for, marry they will make you. You are resolved against Narcissus Browne?"

"Would you advise that?" she deprecatingly asked.

"No, I cannot, even with all the advantages pointed

out, of making flannel petticoats, and theologically loving him in all the roundness and length of patriarchal affection. Will you promise me one thing, Mariam?"

"Any thing in my power, Mr. Elton; for you cheer my heart by kind words."

"That's a good girl; I see I shall make something of you at last. This then I will ask—when I propose a man for your acceptance, whom you may, in all confidence of affectionate gratitude, for the gift of your hand, honour with it, will you do so?"

"You ask much, Mr. Elton," she replied, in a trembling voice; "but I will, if my heart will let me—any one but Richard—but oh, not Richard!"

"I pledge you my word, I will not again urge for him; will that satisfy you?—Poor child!" he mentally said, "she thinks I do not read her. Her every thought is Richard, and her too susceptible nature would ruin her happiness, and his too, or I mistake much, were I not here to watch."

Before they parted, Elton had so completely convinced her that she was in error about any participation of Angelina's in mystifying her in Narcissus's case, that she could but look upon it as a complication of annoyances beyond her power to control, and calculated to cause her hourly discomfort by contact with these hapless suitors; she felt only patience and forbearance might conquer; and, as a first step towards subduing her own too hasty temper, at Elton's gently pointing out, this obedient child of a really good-nature went to

Angelina, and meekly, gently begged forgiveness for having suspected and accused her!

There she did little to please; her reception was ill calculated to convey a good lesson—taunts and insolence were her rewards; but Elton pressed her hand when she returned, and, poor lone girl, she felt she could love him dearly—as a father.

"She is a dear child," was his reflection, as he quitted the house, "and in good, loving hands will be a pearl of price; it is indeed to be hoped no meretricious setting may dim her splendour—not if *I* can avert it."

And now, like a phantasmagoria, the scene changes, and we are in a blaze of light, music, flowers, gauzes, hearts loving, and hearts aching, disappointments, and unexpected happiness—in short, we are at a fashionable ball, at Lady somebody's, it matters not, and here meet many, who have not met for some time. Cards had duly been exchanged between the Montgomeries and Adairs, &c., &c.; and Bateman's fair child had a splendid mansion and a kind husband in Berkeley Square. This fair young bride was certainly the season's gem, set in costly fretwork, and worn by the many who jostled one another to possess her at their parties.

Fashion is a fickle, worthless jade. She seldom protects any for *mere* merit; there must be something more attractive. Poor Kate Bateman, struggling in the holy cause of a blind father's support, was left unsought for, by all who had known her, to starve or beg. Lady Montgomery, handsome, dashing, clever, was the

beloved of many; and well did she fling back on the cold world her contempt for it, as she saw those who once looked superciliously at her through their *lorgnettes*, when she was taken on sufferance, a poor tutor's daughter, into society, now hurrying forward to obtain her notice. Every wound her pride had received was remembered; every hand which had then been extended to her, was clasped now in hers. Kate had a fine nature; but unguided, untrained, there was the germ of ruin where only flowers should have been. She knew nothing of Sir Philip's attachment to Mariam, nothing of the motive which made her his; she was sufficiently well aware of her own attractions to suppose that love on his part had dictated the act which made him marry her, and, though her first thought in desiring to be Lady Montgomery had emanated from the wish to wring a pang from Adair's heart, the subsequent impulse was purer and better. A month of kindness from Sir Philip on their wedding tour, which month *both* would willingly have abridged to return to town—but neither had courage to hint such a thing, so great cowards does conscience make us—had created a feeling of gratitude in her heart, almost amounting to affection, which was still farther increased on her return to Berkeley Square, to find her poor father, whom she had left in the care of nurses and attendants, comfortably installed, by Sir Philip's private instructions, to please and surprise her, in an apartment in their own house, a thing she had not ventured to hope. If Sir Philip did not love her

deeply, it was that the canker rankled in his heart against Mariam, and, until that should be eradicated by the violence of a firm resolve, no kindlier feeling could find a place.

Thus, they were both pursuing demon phantoms, which might mar their whole happiness, and lead on to ruin.

Now we will enter the ball-room. Kate may certainly be pardoned if she felt a little vanity on advancing through the crowded rooms, at hearing at each step the words, "Beautiful Lady Montgomery!" or, "How lovely she looks!" and the dozen other flattering, but truthful things, which are offered as incense to worldly charms, but which, most unfortunately, too frequently, instead of rising to the "altar of incense" for our good, like rain-driven smoke, drift downwards to a darker place, with the soul they have perverted.

Face after face passed her, scene followed scene, and yet her wandering eye failed to light upon Adair, her sole engrossing thought; Sir Philip was lost too in searchings vain; and thus, by a strange perversity of fate, they had both been for a whole week since their return to town, for neither at home nor abroad had the four met, or any belonging to their set, sufficiently intimate to cast a light over the darkness of ignorance around them.

Fortune is a gregarious creature, rushing on in the midst of a crowd, never alone.

The first person Kate met was Mr. Bruce. The man's salutation proved his sincerity and freedom from

all worldly consideration, in the pleasure the meeting afforded him.

"My dear Miss Bateman," were the words, and two hands grasped her one, warmly extended towards him; Kate and Sir Philip, on whom she was leaning, both laughed outright.

"What an old fool I am!" exclaimed the rough spoken, generous-hearted man; "and here have I been hurrying into every ball-room this week, to meet and congratulate you, and now when I see you, I call you—"

"Never mind, dear Mr. Bruce," she replied smiling; "your cordial welcome is for little Kate Bateman, and the dearer for that, I take it all to myself."

"And I sincerely congratulate you, Sir Philip," he added, "for you have made a good choice; good daughter, good wife, this is safe ground to build upon."

"I assure you I esteem myself a fortunate man," Mr. Bruce," the other replied, and, as he shook his hand, his eye looked kindly, almost lovingly, on his little wife; it wanted but the assurance of Mariam's perfect indifference towards him, to change liking to love, anxious excitement, to Heaven's best gift—peace.

Surely never were two persons so painfully cast together; Narcissus Browne might safely have preached a sermon thereon, and have made his text, "Lightly and unadvisedly."

"Have you met the Adairs?" inquired Bruce.

"No, are they here?" and as she asked the question, by strangely distorted sympathy, both husband and wife coloured.

"Oh, yes!" was the reply; "I've just been chatting with Miss Lincoln, who looks careworn and sad—by Jove, I pity that girl! She really is a nice creature, and I fear not very happy, or well understood by those on whom she has been so strangely grafted."

"But Mrs. Adair seems a kind person," said Sir Philip, speaking any thing, not to play silence.

"Very, indeed! but the kindest may not understand one another. I fear it is the case here. Miss Lincoln came to England, strange to many things about us all, stranger to every face. I think her a girl of very warm affections; I have seen her often lately, and her evident sadness induced me to watch her, and I tell you what, Lady Montgomery my dear, if ever a girl was in love and out of luck—that is to say, with some barrier between her and the object of it—Mariam Lincoln is that girl; and I am a plain man, and no sentimental fool."

"Surely, with her advantages," Sir Philip said, "she need not love in vain?"

"Love cannot be purchased," involuntarily fell from Kate.

"But she is a handsome girl," urged her husband.

"So *I* say; but all don't agree. Now, my wife tells me—pshaw, though! why drag in my wife, who is always saying something, when I heard it myself. I heard some one joking young Adair about her, and he said he thought her almost plain—he hated dark beauties, that she might be one, in an Indian tribe."

Poor, honest Mr. Bruce was proving the old adage, something about "dirt defiling us;" he had listened to so much scandal at home, that he was growing, at all events, used to it. He little dreamed the mischief he was doing by a few innocent *on-dits* and conjectures.

"Perhaps *she* is in love with Mr. Adair?" hazarded Kate.

"Oh, dear no—certainly not!" laughed Bruce. "I saw them dancing together awhile ago, and no girl in love ever looked so——"

"My dear Kate," rung over the last word and destroyed it, and a warm grasp of the hand accompanied the salutation.

Does it not often occur to us on meeting a once—still prized friend, with whom we have had some slight coldness, to forget even the cause in the joy of meeting; and only afterwards say to ourselves, "Why, I should not have spoken?"

Adair forgot every thing but his delight in seeing Kate; and so seemingly happy—she could not speak, her lips trembled so much. Adair saw this, and the veins in his forehead started with the suppressed emotion her visible suffering caused him; but with great presence of mind he added, "Come, don't be angry at my calling you Kate. I know Sir Philip will pardon almost a brother, in forgetting a name as yet strange, though indeed welcome. From my heart I congratulate you both!"

His frankness at once removed any little flying

suspicion which had been fluttering round the husband's mind; indeed he was too anxious to see Mariam, to heed Kate at that moment; and she, in this horrid game of cross purposes, felt angry with her own weakness for shewing so much emotion, lest it might pain Sir Philip, whom she really esteemed; and for one who, she deemed, had so slighted her.

END OF VOL. I.

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